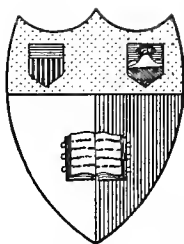


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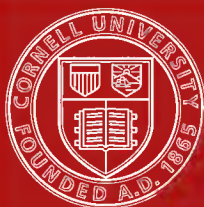
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LIFE OF VISCOUNT RHONDDA



VISCOUNT RHONDDA

Frontispiece

LIFE OF VISCOUNT RHONDDA

BY

THE REV. J. VYRNWY· MORGAN, D.D.

EDITOR AND PART AUTHOR OF

"THE CAMBRO-AMERICAN PULPIT," "WELSH RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN THE
VICTORIAN ERA," "WELSH POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERS
IN THE VICTORIAN ERA," "THEOLOGY AT THE DAWN OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY"

AUTHOR OF

"THE WELSH RELIGIOUS REVIVAL, 1905," "A STUDY IN NATIONALITY"
"THE PHILOSOPHY OF WELSH HISTORY," "THE WAR AND WALES"
"THE CHURCH IN WALES IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY"
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MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S TRIBUTE TO LORD RHONDDA

AT LEEDS, DECEMBER 7TH, 1918

"LET me say this of Lord Rhondda's rationing system: that it abolished queues. It so distributed food that there was no difference between the rich and the poor. The Germans themselves, in an official report we had two or three months before the war was over, called attention to the system in Britain, and pointed out how superior it was to their system. It was a system, let me say, for which Lord Rhondda gave his life. I am glad he saw the success of the efforts for which he had paid such a sacrifice, and that he received the gratitude that was his due before he passed away."

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PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND

|
DEDICATED
TO
J. H. THOMAS, ESQ.
LATE OF YSGUBORWEN
AS A MARK OF ESTEEM AND FRIENDSHIP

VISCOUNT RHONDDA AND THE MASONIC ORDER

BRO. LORD RHONDDA, P.G.W.

V. W. BRO. LORD RHONDDA, P.G.W., was initiated in the Loyal Cambrian Lodge, No. 110, Merthyr Tydvil, in 1889, became its W.M. in 1895, and was appointed to the rank of Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in the Province of South Wales (E.D.) in the same year. He was a founder of the Hendre Lodge, No. 3250, Cardiff, consecrated in 1908, and of the Cardiff Exchange Lodge, No. 3775, consecrated in 1917. In 1890 he became a joining member of the St. David's Lodge, No. 679, Aberdare. He was also a member of the Caer-daf Chapter of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, No. 118, Cardiff. In 1917 he was appointed Senior Grand Warden of the United Grand Lodge of England. Bro. Lord Rhondda was a Vice-Patron of the three Masonic Institutions, a subscriber of fifty guineas to the Freemasons' War Hospital and Masonic Nursing Home, and a Vice-President of the South Wales Eastern Division Home Charities.

He took a great interest in Masonic matters, and was as frequent a visitor to private Lodges as health and duties would permit. He was present at a meeting of the Gallery Lodge, No. 1928, in February of the present year, as the guest of his friend of many years standing, Bro. Sir Alfred Robbins, President of the Board of General Purposes, and Almoner of the Lodge.

PREFACE

IT is now more than four years since the idea of writing a book on Viscount Rhondda occurred to me. After reading my work on *The War and Wales*, he wrote suggesting an interview, which took place the week before he accepted the Presidency of the Local Government Board. Into the object of that interview I need not enter here ; but I may say that I then expressed to him my intention of writing a book based on his early days and business life, and he acquiesced. That was at the time when he was a subject rather for blame than for praise ; before his name had become associated with fruitful legislative work, and before it was thought that he could have attained such a measure of greatness. The ashes of industrial controversy, in which he was so much concerned, were still hot. Like other noted men of the past, he seemed to be suffering through the very effectiveness of his own work and success as a business man.

My acquaintance with him, though not at any time of an intimate nature, extended over a quarter of a century. I knew him during his Parliamentary career, which, as the late Lord Robson once said, "was not a happy one." He then impressed me as a politician of striking unlikeness to other politicians ;

as a man of singular versatility, astuteness and disinterestedness, as well as a man of high moral rectitude who had been misunderstood and underrated.

Though the note of independence is not wanting in this work, the standpoint from which I have approached Viscount Rhondda is less that of a critic than of an admiring friend. While I have honestly endeavoured to strike the mean between importunate advocacy and excessive laudation, I must confess to a partiality for one whose remarkable abilities were so tardily recognized, and who suffered and endured political ostracism for so many years, with such dignity and quiet forbearance.

Unfortunately, there is not in England, or Scotland, or Ireland, a large circle of readers interested in Welsh literature, or Welsh worthies; this is a consideration that has always weighed with English Publishers, especially those of them who regard the whole matter from a purely pecuniary, or business point of view. True, Viscount Rhondda has the merit of appealing to a double audience—one a purely Welsh audience, another composed of a larger public beyond the border. At the same time it has to be said that while, in view of his work in America and Canada, and as President of the Local Government Board and Food Controller, the larger public cannot and should not be lost sight of, it is clear that Wales has the claim to the greater consideration, for in spite of his cosmopolitan experience, he was essentially a Welshman, though not of the narrow kind. His heart throbbed with the spirit of ardent nationality, and the story of his life as a whole has, therefore, a special significance for

Welshmen, and for the inhabitants of the Principality generally.

The Welshman represents a type of personality, and the Welsh in the aggregate a type of national character, at so many points different from the English or Scottish, that only a genuine Welshman can possibly portray a picture on broad and sympathetic lines of Wales and Welshmen. It is only the man who has been nurtured in Welsh traditions, and who has the true Celtic temperament, who is able to understand the life of a brother Celt, and consequently interpret that life to others.

As the natives of a country are the best judges of their own language, literature, politics, traditions and religion, so they are, or should be, the best judges of their own great men, though they may on occasions fail to do them full justice. There are certain shades of thought and meaning in the native literature, both prose and poetic, certain peculiarities of humour and temperament, certain idiosyncrasies of character, which appeal to the native mind and heart, but which a non-Welshman, however acute, cannot understand or appreciate. It is more difficult for a foreigner to appreciate the music of Milton's diction than for an Englishman, and it is more difficult for an Englishman to appreciate the genius, or the racial qualities, of a Welshman than for a Welshman himself.

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the main characteristics, or the paradoxical elements, which lie at the root of the Welsh temperament. We may, however, observe incidentally that the complex nature of these elements has always

proved a serious obstacle to a proper understanding of the Welsh character on the part of a non-Welshman, or of a Welshman by extraction who is not conversant with the native language, and who has not by birth and up-bringing been imbued with the spirit of the people. Indeed, too many have been unmindful of the fact that there are certain vital differences between Welshmen and the people of the other countries. This has been one of the weak points in the legislative treatment of Wales in times past, as well as of those who, in consequence of casual acquaintance with Wales, or with the inhabitants of Wales, have deemed themselves qualified to interpret Welsh life and thought.

Viscount Rhondda was a complex and difficult personality, and in this regard, at any rate, he may be said to have been, in a large measure, a representative Welshman. An analysis of the Welsh nature shows a combination of the obstinate and plastic, the ideal and practical, the gloomy and cheerful, the indulgent and severe, the magnanimous and jealous, the tolerant and arbitrary elements. They are seen, more or less, in the native literature, native politics, native religion, and in native habits and traditions.

Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, in his obituary notice in the *British Weekly*, said that a book ought to be written on Viscount Rhondda, and I am of the opinion that if Viscount Rhondda himself could have been consulted, he would not have dissented from his view that such a book ought to be written by a Welshman ; that is, assuming that he answers the description of a competent person. If I had not

had it in my mind to produce a book on Viscount Rhondda long before his death, I could not have written this work, as I have done, in so short a time. Neither could I have written the chapters which deal with his ancestry and his early days with such accuracy and completeness, if I had not received the valuable assistance of his brother, Mr. J. H. Thomas, to whom I am greatly indebted, not only for such information, but also for his uniform courtesy and kindness.

Biographies may be divided into two classes. In the one we place those in which the aim seems to be, merely that of narration and description, that is, simply the writing of an interesting story. This method is comparatively easy, but it appeals to an indiscriminating public. In the other class of biographies we may place those in which the essential aim is that of the interpretation of the life with which the biography deals. This is a task of much greater difficulty, but it has the compensation of being of much greater value and of being more permanent.

I have chosen the more difficult task, and have endeavoured to lead my readers to understand the personality of Viscount Rhondda, and the way in which his personality revealed itself. I have written from the inside, and my impressions are not second-hand. For reasons which I need not explain, I have only barely touched upon the religious side of his character. I do not think that his views of the Bible and religion, which he privately expressed, and which he never intended for publication, should be introduced into his biography. He was certainly

interested in the question of education in Wales, but he was in no sense an Educational Leader, and he played no great part in the development of education in the Principality.

The writing of the book has been to me a labour of love. Authors, we are told, are notoriously bad judges of their own work ; but I can repeat what Dickens asserts in the preface to one of his novels, that no one can ever believe the narrative in the reading, more than he believed it in the writing.

I should be wholly wanting in my duty if I did not place on record my obligation to my wife for her co-operation in the preparation of this work. She has greatly facilitated my labours, and eased my anxiety, at a time when indifferent health made the carrying out of my purpose very difficult. For very valuable help of various kinds, I am indebted to the Rev. A. W. Parry, M.A., B.Sc., Principal of the Training College, Carmarthen, and to the Rev. D. Silyn Evans, Aberdare ; for reading and correcting my proofs to the Rev. G. C. Rowe, B.A., and Mrs. Montagu Leeds, Tenby ; and to J. A. P. Mackenzie, Esq., Librarian of the Royal Statistical Society, for his permission to peruse a copy of Viscount Rhondda's Paper on Coal Exports.

J. VYRNWY MORGAN.

November 7th, 1918.

INTRODUCTION

By VISCOUNT RHONDDA'S BROTHER

WHEN the Rev. Dr. Vyrnwy Morgan informed me that he was engaged in writing a book on my brother, Viscount Rhondda, I gladly responded to his wish that I should verify his facts and supply him with any additional information respecting his ancestors, early days, business life and public career. This I have done for two reasons. Firstly, Dr. Morgan is a writer of distinction who has laid Wales under an obligation to him for his valuable contributions to Welsh literature. It is recognized that he has rendered great service as a biographer of Welsh worthies of modern times, and that he has provided those who live across the Border with a scientific yet sympathetic interpretation of Wales and Welsh history. He has shown great insight into the temper of the nation as well as of the history of Welsh religion, Welsh politics and Welsh traditions. Secondly, though Viscount Rhondda was a much-travelled man who took a wide view of life and public movements, he was an ardent Welshman, and his life and personality can only be properly understood and interpreted by a Welshman.

I have had the pleasure of reading the greater part

of Dr. Morgan's work in manuscript form, and I am free to confess that I am of the opinion that he has acquitted himself, as those who are acquainted with his works might naturally expect, with conspicuous ability, candour and judgment. He has given a lifelike portrait of Viscount Rhondda, and has set forth his character in the light in which, I think, he ought to be judged. He has not handled his subject in any narrow way of party, or race, or class, and it represents my own clear view of the spirit in which my brother's career should be studied and composed. Having been so closely associated with him in business, and having been brought up on the same hearth, it is but natural to suppose that I knew him in all his strength and weakness, and that I understood his instincts and temperament, and, if I may say so, fully realized his great capacities.

The secret of the success and value of this work seems to me to consist in the fact that Dr. Morgan has seized upon those phases in the life of my brother, which appeared to some to be complex and perplexing, and upon the motives and forces that swayed and controlled his actions. It is a patriotic work, and I can only express the hope that it will prove an inspiration to the younger generation of Welshmen, and that it will have a large circulation not only in Wales and in Great Britain, but in other countries where his name is known and his services are appreciated.

J. H. THOMAS.

November 2nd, 1918.

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LIFE OF VISCOUNT RHONDDA

CHAPTER I

VISCOUNT RHONDDA'S ANCESTRY

EVERYBODY knows, said the famous Pietro Aretino, how much dignity Alexander gained from being born of a King, and how much was added to Cæsar because he was not descended from an Emperor. It is when we study the early days of Viscount Rhondda by the light diffused from a later period, especially his latter days, that we realize the degree of social and national dignity, that came to him. In no historical character of recent years more remarkably than in his, is the law—though tardy and somewhat irregular—of constant development and progress illustrated. Once he got his foot on the first step of that difficult ascent which was to rise before him all his lifetime, he never turned back. Not only did he amass a fortune which was almost regal, but he acquired a reputation which a monarch might envy, and he was laid to rest as if he were a man of Sovereign rank. He had in him the germs of what was to expand into moral and national greatness.

But since in these days, when the study of here-

dity has received so much attention, it is not permissible to consider, or to delineate, any man's life and character, especially if it be a national possession, without taking into account his ancestors' lives and their environment, it will be necessary for us to supply a few simple facts concerning his pedigree.

We do not propose to relate all the known or unknown facts; that is not necessary, and it would simply encumber the chapter with unimportant details. A biographer or historian must select; he must consciously or unconsciously follow some principle or purpose. Our purpose is to portray the shades of Viscount Rhondda's character as they strike the eye on their darker or brighter ground; to trace the secret of the very extensive influence which he exercised; to show that his ability was equal to every demand made upon it; to explain why he did his work in his own way and not according to the prescription of others; to discover, as far as it is possible, how much of his success was due to his personal qualities, to the circumstances in which he was placed, and in which he played the part of a Cromwell; to detect the psychical characteristics of his ancestors which gave him the strength of a man and some of his weaknesses.

Fortunately, we have the authority of Viscount Rhondda's only surviving brother, J. H. Thomas, late of Ysguborwen, for the facts which we relate regarding the history of the family and Viscount Rhondda's early days. There can be no better or more reliable authority. It is, of course, difficult

for one who is closely related to the subject of a memoir, to form a correct or a totally unbiassed view of his character, or to refrain from adopting an attitude of reserve respecting his weak traits. But Mr. J. H. Thomas possesses one of the signal characteristics of his brother, namely, loyalty to facts and to truth, and a dislike of picturesque and illusory effects. It is the real, not the mythical, Viscount Rhondda that he wishes the author to portray.

Viscount Rhondda descended from a family morally noble, socially honourable and industrious. A good or a noble ancestry operates in two ways ; it adds to the strength of a good man, but it makes a bad man contemptible. There are men who have nothing to their credit except what they are able to draw from their grandsires' ashes. Someone said that he who has nothing to recommend him, or to boast of, but his godly, rich, or illustrious ancestors, is like a potato, for the only good that belongs to him is underground. " You are the first of your line," said a mean and an ignorant man of noble lineage to Cicero. " And you," answered Cicero, " are the last of yours."

Pride of family has often been excessive and unreasonable, even where the ancestors have been men who rendered their country very conspicuous service, and it can only be regarded as an example of human weakness. On the other hand, if any reliance is to be placed on the scientific doctrine of heredity, the descendants of ancestors who have left an honourable record of thrift, labour, honesty, integrity and acquisitiveness, are surely entitled

to pride themselves on their pedigree. It would be impossible to overrate the influence exercised by family traditions upon a perceptive and a sympathetic character ; this is shown in the determination to follow the line of life in which an ancestor distinguished himself. There is nothing more painful, and nothing more disadvantageous to a member of a family, than to have to recall, or to be reminded of, a family record that is unworthy of respect or of emulation.

Indeed, of all studies there is none more interesting or perplexing than the study of heredity, or of family life, the seed plot of all habits of thought and habitual emotions, which eventually culminate in vice or virtue, in misery or happiness, in failure or success. The teaching of both history and science is, that the family with its inherited traits or impulses, its noble or sordid proclivities, its impaired or elevated brain power, its rash or cautious movements, its frugal or extravagant habits, is the one important and indestructible factor in human society. A good family, or a good ancestral record, is a vantage ground, an ignoble or an indifferent one the reverse. True, the vantage ground may be destroyed, and the poor record improved.

It is a melancholy, as well as a glorious, reflection, that a child cannot determine the nature of the impressions that will shape its disposition and mould its feelings. That comes within the province of parent, teacher and friend. Moreover, cognizance must be taken of what is inherent in the child's nature—the intangible and the inevitable. This is the load of responsibility that each parent and each

generation carries. The key that opens the future, the germ in the soil, the spirit that is embalmed in the soul of the offspring—this is the mystery of the ages, a fact, and an appalling fact, that paralyzes the understanding, and fills the imagination with a sense of impotency and of failure. Science is now busy teaching it as a principle ; but long before the birth of science it was enunciated in the Bible, as a law of our being.

There is another solemn consideration : the lower nature with its animal passions seems to be endowed with a superfluity of power to transmit itself, while the higher nature with its moral passions becomes more easily exhausted. Children of the great are seldom as great as their parents, and the offspring appears with a dent where the parent had a predominance. This applies with equal force to the spiritual side of man. Say, if you like, that it is the exception to the one great universal law ; say it is inconsistent with the theory of evolution ; but the examples are numerous—so numerous, indeed, that we may almost give them the name of laws. Most scientists are agreed that the transmission of *acquired* qualities or characteristics is unproved. By *acquired* qualities or characteristics is meant those arising in response to a stimulus ; they denote the character that appears in the individual as the result of use or disuse, or as the direct effect of external influences. Generally speaking, they are adaptive qualities ; that is, they render the organism better fitted to its surroundings than if they had been developed. It was once thought that these *acquired* qualities or characteristics were inherited

in the same way, or as strongly as *inborn* qualities or characteristics ; but the belief is now held that acquired characteristics are seldom, if ever, transmitted. It is considered possible for acquired constitutional changes to be transmitted, or to produce secondary effects upon the offspring.

This theory has an attractive and a consoling feature ; it frees us from the discouraging thought that we are struggling against nature in the effort to conquer evil tendencies. We need not despair of being able to eradicate defects that have no root in the offspring's nature.

It is therefore clear that the two proverbs, " Like begets like " and " Nature never uses the same mould twice," are contradictory ; for if like begets like, nature uses the same mould for all the members of the family. But the truth is that the offspring of the same parentage may and do differ among themselves, and that the characters of a parent are not evenly or uniformly distributed among the children.

How the characters of a parent are distributed among the children ; what is the mechanism by which the resemblances and diversities, physical, moral and mental, are brought about ; whether the difference due to the action of circumstances is inherited ; whether the different causes of variation have different origins and how the environment may act directly or indirectly ; whether the kinds of variation that are inherent in the individual are independent of the manner of life ; how these variations or differences are transmitted to later generations, and what is the average contribution of each generation of ancestors, are questions of amazing

perplexity and transcendent importance, both to the individual and to society.

Their bearing upon the theories of evolution, upon the problem of biology, that is, upon the ultimate nature of living matter, and upon sociology—the science of men living together in society—is also a question of infinite importance ; they are so closely related that they cannot be considered or treated separately.

When we study the family history of Viscount Rhondda, we have a concrete illustration of the working of the law of variation ; and when we study his character, his temperament, his disposition and ambition, his exceptional mental qualities, and the manner in which his personality revealed itself, we find that he was influenced both by his parents and by ancestors beyond his parents ; that he developed qualities and characteristics not possessed by either of his parents ; that the mother's influence over him was not altogether similar to that of the father ; that while he inherited some qualities from his father, he inherited others from his mother. Though his father and mother were not great in any sense, they were exceptional. The father in one direction, that is, in the gift of initiative and business enterprise ; the mother in another direction. She was ambitious, and had ambitions for her children. Indeed, it would be true to say that parental love was a stronger impulse in the mother than in the father. This, of course, is the rule. It is unquestionably instinctive in the mother. In the case of Viscount Rhondda's mother, her parental love was bestowed upon him as lavishly in his manhood as in his infancy

and childhood. In his entry into public life and in his ambition for a Parliamentary career, his mother was the inspiring force. The reader will be able to draw his own conclusions as to how far, and in what respect, heredity and inherent qualities affected Viscount Rhondda's character and life, and also what part environment and circumstances played in their development by giving them the opportunity. It is as interesting and instructive to linger where the candle of this great man's career was laid, as it is to linger where the candle of his race was laid.

We are first introduced to Viscount Rhondda's paternal ancestors in the year 1770, the date of the birth of his grandfather, John Thomas, known in later years as John Thomas, of Cyfarthfa. He was the son of a yeoman farmer, who owned a copyhold in the parish of Magor, near Newport, which now forms part of the Llanwern Estate, and which had been for generations in the family, but of which no trace could be found until recently. John Thomas's father was called David ; there was always a David in the family, which came originally from the shores of Milford Haven.

His occupation was that of a contractor at the Cyfarthfa Works under the first Richard Crawshay. He was also engaged in farming in the neighbourhood of the works, keeping a number of horses. He was a man who was held in high esteem, both on account of his personal character and industry. The house in which he resided was built for him by Richard Crawshay, with whom he was on friendly terms, in that part of Penyard which was ultimately absorbed in the extension of Cyfarthfa works.

John Thomas married Jane Prichard, of Penyrheol, Talgarth, Breconshire. She was born in 1776, and was a granddaughter of a brother of Howell Harris. Mrs. Thomas, it seems, managed the farm whilst her husband attended to his contracts, and let out his horses for the conveyance of materials to the Cyfarthfa works. She was a member of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination; the tenets of this religious body were so ineradically planted in her mind, that she had almost a delightful conviction of the doctrine which represents God as arbitrarily dealing out salvation and damnation to selected individuals. She was susceptible to religious enthusiasm, and was an habitual attendant at the religious gatherings of the denomination to which she belonged; but temperamentally she was irascible, susceptible to anger, and very querulous. When she visited the house of her son Samuel, the father of Viscount Rhondda, she always had some fault to find, and always something to argue about. Her visits were not conducive to peace and concord, so that her appearance was rather dreaded than otherwise.

John Thomas was not of the same religious persuasion as his wife. He started his religious life as a Churchman, but afterwards became a Baptist. He died April 3rd, 1812, at the age of forty-two, before his children reached manhood. He was buried in the burial ground attached to Ebenezer Chapel in Plymouth Street, Merthyr. When it was rebuilt the grave was enclosed in the interior of the building.

Notwithstanding the fact that John Thomas had left his widow in comfortable circumstances, she and her son Samuel went to the first Joseph Bailey

nephew of Richard Crawshay, to ask him to use his influence in order that the hauling contract at the Cyfarthfa works should be carried on by her. Mr. Crawshay allowed it for a week or so ; hence the origin of Viscount Rhondda's story about his father being a " Door boy." Mrs. Thomas died April 7th, 1857, when eighty years of age. Her remains were interred in the graveyard belonging to Cae Pontywyll Methodist Chapel. There were three sons of the marriage, one of whom became a noted man in his day, both as preacher and theologian. We refer to the Rev. David Thomas, Highbury Church, Bristol, whose memory is still revered by all who are acquainted with his life. It is after him that Viscount Rhondda, it is said, was named David, though, as we have already observed, there was always a David in the family.

Samuel, the eldest son of John Thomas and father of Viscount Rhondda, was born in 1800. In some of the obituary notices which appeared in the press at the time of Viscount Rhondda's death, it was stated that his father, Samuel Thomas, was a student at the Cowbridge Grammar School at the same time as the late Lord Aberdare. This, however, is not correct. Lord Aberdare, then known as Henry Austin Bruce, was born at Duffryn, in the parish of Aberdare, April 16th, 1815 ; so that he was Samuel Thomas's junior by fifteen years. It was at the Eagle School, Cowbridge, not the Grammar School, that Samuel Thomas was educated, the school where the late Judge Gwilym Williams, of Miskin, was educated about forty years afterwards. He also was a native of Aberdare, being the son of

Mr. William Williams (Alaw Goch). In 1903 he published a volume of his father's works. He was the first Welsh-speaking judge that was appointed in the reign of Queen Victoria.

After leaving Cowbridge, Samuel Thomas went to Taliesin Williams's School at Merthyr, principally in order to study navigation, he having been promised a cadetship in the East India Company by Sir Christopher Cole, who was a retired Commodore, and M.P. for one of the Glamorgan constituencies ; but Sir Christopher Cole lost his seat in Parliament and failed to fulfil his promise, with the result that Samuel Thomas was left without any occupation. Subsequently, he was apprenticed to the grocery business in a shop owned by Messrs. William and Christopher James, one of whom was the father of Lord Milburn James, one of the judges of the High Court. After completing his apprenticeship, Samuel Thomas opened up business for himself as a grocer, tea dealer, and draper. His shop was considered then the best stocked shop in Merthyr, and the business prospered greatly.

About 1840 he started Dan-y-Deri Colliery, near Troedyrhiw, and took in Thomas Joseph, his brother-in-law, as partner and general manager. In 1849 he leased Ysguborwen from the ancestors of the present Lord Plymouth. Later, he leased Bwllfa, in the parish of Aberdare ; but the collieries were very extravagantly managed, and the partnership was dissolved in 1855. Some time afterwards Mr. Samuel Thomas took Mr. Ebenezer Lewis as partner, but the partnership lasted a very short time, Mr. Lewis retaining Bwllfa as his share. In March, 1871,

Samuel Thomas leased the property which is now known as the Cambrian Collieries, and proceeded to sink a pair of pits four hundred yards deep ; he was then seventy-one years of age.

He was twice married. His first wife was the daughter of Benjamin Williams, of Twynyrodyn ; there was one child of the marriage, who died in infancy. Mr. Benjamin Williams was the grandfather of the late B. Francis Williams, K.C., who was Recorder of Cardiff, and leader of the Welsh Circuit for twenty years. Mrs. Rachel Thomas, the second wife of Samuel Thomas, and the mother of Viscount Rhondda, was the daughter of Morgan Joseph, of Pencae Bach, Merthyr, who was general manager of the Plymouth Collieries and Iron Works, Merthyr, a position which his father and grandfather had held before him. The Josephs were originally called Watkins. Having squandered their property in Breconshire, they removed to Glyn Neath. To which branch of the Watkins family they belonged it is impossible to say. Morgan Joseph had married Jane Williams, of Forest Nest, in the parish of Merthyr, where the family had been settled for over six hundred years. It has been stated, but on what authority we do not know, that Captain Watkins, who was in mid-Victorian days a lord-lieutenant of Breconshire, ruined the family fortune by making extravagant preparations in anticipation of a visit from the late Queen Victoria.

Samuel Thomas did not relinquish the grocery business when he became proprietor of the Dan-y-Deri Colliery ; being a keen business and level-headed man, he wanted to be assured of his success

as a colliery speculator before taking such a step. However, he made more money in the coal trade than he had made in the grocery business. From the most modest beginnings, he gradually worked his way until he became one of the leading and most prosperous colliery speculators in South Wales. As it is natural to suppose, he had some disputes with his workmen, but on the whole the relation between him and them was a friendly one. Those were the times when the relation between employer and employed was of a more personal character than it has been since the days before extreme Socialists and Syndicalists had appeared on the scene. Samuel Thomas abandoned the grocery business about the year 1851; shortly afterwards he and his family removed from Merthyr into the little cottage on Cardiff Road, Aberdare, being a block of buildings called "Y Wâl Wên," The White Wall. This is the cottage where it is erroneously thought by some Viscount Rhondda was born; but his certificate of birth shows that he was born at Ysguborwen. Shortly afterwards the family finally removed to Ysguborwen, making it their permanent home.

Samuel Thomas was High Constable for Merthyr for about four years, that was between 1833 and 1837. Having only four watchmen to assist him, it was no small task to preserve social order among such a turbulent population. But Samuel Thomas was a strict disciplinarian, and he knew no fear. Like his son, Viscount Rhondda, he never bent to any storm that beat about his head; and while he, like his son, believed in freedom of speech and action, he also believed in authority, and in enforcing law

and order in the community. Many a disturber of the peace who was not amenable to reason and moral persuasion, felt the force of the official staff which he carried, and which he did not hesitate to use when necessary. There was no bank at Aberdare in those days. Samuel Thomas had to go to Merthyr every Friday to draw out the money that he needed to pay his workmen at the colliery. On one occasion he was attacked by robbers, but he galloped down a steep hill and got away. The Abernant money was stolen once. When the fact became known, the Abernant colliers and puddlers left their work to hunt for the robbers ; after a good deal of searching they found the money under a large flat stone.

Samuel Thomas was quick to take offence and quick to anger, a mode of emotional excitability peculiar to men of the energetic, impulsive character ; but he was also quick to forgive. He was never known to go out of his way to do a mean thing ; vindictiveness was foreign to his nature. He found no ferocious pleasure in revenge ; and, though a man of austere and strenuous mood, it cost him something to drop friendships, though such was the severity of his character and his earnestness, that he would break with anything, and with any social ties, that threatened to check or circumvent him and his projects.

He was weak in the æsthetic sentiments, both in their elementary and in their higher forms, such, for instance, as are involved in the appreciation of painting and sculpture. For the refinements and superfluities of our modern civilization he had no

liking ; his tastes were primitive. To him the æsthetic experiences were more or less useless ; but he had enough and to spare of the aboriginal human marrow in his bones. Like his wife, he was ambitious, but, unlike her, he was not vain. It was from his mother that Viscount Rhondda inherited his self-esteem and his æsthetic tastes. She was profoundly dissatisfied with the surroundings of Ysguborwen, and was always calling for improvements, but the more she pleaded for improvements, the more her husband objected. Two persons more opposed in taste and emotions it would be impossible to conceive. Samuel Thomas was a hard business man of the calculating type, and economical to a fault ; a thorough believer in the adage, "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves." Mrs. Thomas was a warm-hearted, generous-minded woman, who found it difficult to refuse help to those who needed or asked for it. But Samuel Thomas had no such scruples ; he could refuse, and did. If he gave, it was from convictions, but to convince him was no easy matter.

But there was one essential point upon which both husband and wife agreed, that is, in enforcing domestic discipline, though there was greater severity, perhaps, on the part of the father than of the mother. "My father," said Luther, in after years, "once whipped me so severely that I fled from him, and it was hard for him to win me back. . . . My mother once beat me until the blood flowed, for having stolen a miserable nut. It was this strict discipline that finally forced me into the monastery, although they meant heartily well by it." But if

Samuel Thomas was severe in his discipline, he was never known to exceed the bounds of reason and common sense. But he was firm, even inflexible; it was his firmness, his inflexibility of will, and his insistence upon obedience, that gave the *set* to the character of Viscount Rhondda. Father and son were masterful men.

It is necessary to make some reference to the religious history of the family. Up to about 1859 they attended the Welsh Baptist Chapel at Aberdare, called Calfaria, of which the Rev. Thomas Price, M.A., PH.D., a noted man in his day, was pastor. Welsh was the language of the home, and Welsh only. But Mrs. Thomas was an ambitious woman, and far-sighted. An English nurse was engaged so that the children might get into the way of talking English. About 1859 the family left Calfaria Chapel and joined the English Baptist Chapel, called Carmel, on the opposite side of the road, of which the Rev. James Owen, of Swansea, was the minister. The old name was "Penypound," a place which the Baptists took over from the Independents in 1810. After Mr. James Owen's marriage there was some unpleasantness, and he subsequently resigned on the plea that his salary was insufficient. Samuel Thomas looked upon Mr. James Owen as a man of great promise, and they were both on very cordial terms. He tried to persuade Mr. Owen to remain, and offered to pay him, out of his own pocket, any salary that he might name.

Mr. Owen was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Price, who was no relation of Dr. Thomas Price. Samuel Thomas did not seem to appreciate the

ministry of Mr. Price, and there was some unpleasantness, with the result that he and his family left and joined the Tabernacle English Congregational Church, during the ministry of the Rev. W. Jenkins, who hailed from Bristol. In 1871, Mr. Jenkins received and accepted a call to London. He was succeeded by the Rev. J. Farr, but the last state of the church was worse than the first. Samuel Thomas was so discouraged and disgusted that he left, and afterwards did not attend any place of worship. On Sundays he used to read at home what sermonical literature he could find.

Viscount Rhondda has been claimed as a Congregationalist, but it is interesting to note that he was christened at St. Andrew's Church, near Barry, in 1882, when he was twenty-six years of age, by the Vicar, the Rev. W. Jenkins, who was a very broad-minded man, too broad to suit Churchmen. He held the belief that when the rite of baptism was conferred on an adult, or when a child had grown up, Confirmation was unnecessary. Viscount Rhondda, like his father in late years, had his ideas as to the warring of sects; indeed, religion was a subject concerning which he spoke less than he thought.

Domestic, social, and religious conditions have changed very materially since the days of Samuel Thomas. Family life is not what it used to be; there has been a perceptible decline of parental authority, and of the influence of religion in the home. The old conception of the family as the matrix in which character is moulded, has lost much of its significance. The austere tradition of Puritan family life,

with its strength and shortcomings, has been replaced by a sensuous, decorative, fibreless society; ethical influence is stronger than the religious, and conditions are less favourable to the development of individuality. Sacred things are less sacred; there is a growing tendency to rely upon the State and State aid for almost everything, rather than upon individual energy.

There is a good and a bad side to the intervention of the State. Its curtailment of the parents' proprietary and administrative rights over their offspring is good in so far as it protects children from brutal and immoral parents, and prevents parents from making money by their children's earnings. Regarded in this light, the State has no alternative. The generality of children grow up better educated; they are better informed, and supervision is kept over their physical well-being. But one of the evils of the new system is that an increasing number of parents among the lower classes, even of many parents among the middle classes, are more and more inclined to shift all responsibility upon the State. There are children at school who ought to be in the nursery at home, but parents are glad to send them to school because it leaves them free to consider their own pleasure, and relieve them of what is too often considered in these days, a burden.

There is something incredibly holy and serious in the conception of a home. The old Puritan household which many of this generation can recall, was an institution that has a title to be commemorated. It is now the proud boast of some that Puritanism

is no longer a force in art or letters or statesmanship, and that the Puritan tradition of family life is dead. But Puritanism is still a force in statesmanship, as is proved by the career and some of the legislative acts of the present Prime Minister. Let them ponder over the iron drill to which the citizens of this country have been subjected during this war—habitual abstemiousness in food, reservation in speech, moderation in drink, and domestic economy. The War has whipped, subdued and sobered the nation in more than one sense, and it is all the better for such hard discipline. It has caused our rulers to place severe restrictions upon our passions and our personal liberties. This is of the very essence of Puritanism.

True, Puritanism has had its weak as well as its strong points ; there is not a word to be said in favour of its excesses any more than there is to be said in favour of the excesses of self-indulgence and of unlimited freedom of action for the individual. But Puritanism taught the young that they had obligations ; now they are encouraged to think only of their rights, and of the obligations of the State to them ; parental authority is very largely at a discount, to which, in part, we are to attribute the decline in governmental authority. If we compare the Puritans and the descendants of the Puritans with their more modern counterparts, in earnestness, truthfulness, seriousness, or in morals and intellectuality, the Puritans need not stand back abashed.

It was the Puritan or rigid discipline in the homestead at Ysguborwen that gave Viscount Rhondda

his moral fibre, his concentration of purpose, his sense of the value of obedience, his intrepid haughtiness of spirit, his staying qualities, his veracity, the correctness of his private life, and his exemplary conduct. He could be, as his father was, stern, and as his mother was, proud, yet in the small circle of his more intimate associates, he was amiable and friendly, and civil to all comers.

His puritanical spirit and conception of human conduct he directed into his own business. He imposed discipline on others because he had learned to impose it upon himself. It was as the nation's drill-master, in his capacity as Food Controller, that he won fame, and caused his name to be honoured throughout the land. He did in a great crisis, only on a much smaller scale and under different conditions, what Frederick the Great did for Prussia, what Peter the Great did for Russia, what William the Conqueror did for England, when with an inflexible will and hand he brought the Normans and the Plantagenets amenable to law and discipline. It was hard discipline that converted the old gluttonous Jutes and Angles into a nation heroic in industry.

There is another important matter upon which Viscount Rhondda's father and mother were agreed, namely, giving their children the best possible education and training for their life work. Samuel Thomas was a man of no common stamp; yet of a kind not so rare in Wales, frugal, independent and patriotic, with an honest ambition for his children's culture and education and advancement—an aim ever dear to the hearts of Welsh parents—whose

self-discipline, industry, perseverance, and application to business, raised him above his original station in life to a plane above what that position might be expected to yield. For these ends both husband and wife laboured and suffered cheerfully together. They builded, it may be, better than they knew ; they did not live to see the true greatness of their son, or the greatness of the services which he rendered his country. His father died a year or so before he left Cambridge, in 1880 ; his mother died sixteen years later, March 21st, 1896, in London, at the age of seventy-one, and was buried in the vault at St. Fagans, Trecynon. Most assuredly, they, as well as the great and filial son whom they reared, have a claim to the remembrance of this generation, and to the attention of those to come.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF VISCOUNT RHONDDA

VISCOUNT RHONDDA'S life falls naturally into four parts. The first of these covers his birth and early days—the years of preparation ; the second includes his business career ; the third comprises the twenty-four years he spent in Parliament ; the fourth embraces his services to the State as President of the Local Government Board and Food Controller. It is a life full of romance—a romance that appeals just as much to the man of affairs as to the psychologist—just as much to the business man as to the politician !

But the interest of his life or career depends neither on the beginning nor the end, glorious as that end was. It depends on what transpired between the beginning and the end ; on the uses to which he applied his specific natural talents, the talents that were hereditary and those that may have appeared unexpectedly, as they sometimes do even in soil apparently unpropitious. It depends on the character which circumstances developed ; on the directions in which he was prepared to offer his services to the community ; on the influence exercised by the attitudes and actions of those among whom he lived ; on the course of the life he led and its general results.

When we examine his record as a whole, and consider its manifestations during the intervening period between his childhood days and his death, we are forced to the conclusion that it was a life crowded with events of singular import and significance. The interest which these events inspired was strongly felt by his contemporaries, and it will be felt in many ways for years to come. If we judge his life by comparison, we may say that if he was in some qualities the inferior of some of his contemporaries who have achieved a large measure of fame, yet some qualities which he never had an opportunity of showing until a few years before his death, were developed in him to an extraordinary degree. He was no adventurer who unexpectedly, or accidentally, lands in a rich island and acquires its treasures, and gives it its name; he was rather a man of a transcendent order, who finally vindicated himself in spite of the doubt which always seemed to hang over his real intentions and dispositions.

He was not a mere personification; that is, of opinions, passions, and talents; but an individual whose individuality was stamped upon all his actions. He was not a man of normal make-up. True, every individual is more or less a variant from the human norm, and the difference between one man and another is not really as great as the ignorant and superstitious masses often suppose. But though every individual is in some sense a variant from the ordinary human norm, the variation does not develop or show itself in the same manner in every individual, and it is more intense and singular in some than in others. No one could fail to detect

this variation in the individuality of Viscount Rhondda ; it was so pronounced that the element of disagreement was stronger in him, even in his younger days, than the element of agreement and imitation. It was partly on account of his singularity that his political advancement was checked, and that his Parliamentary life was so unfruitful. It must be confessed that his political influence upon Welsh national life was very small indeed.

There are some who hold the view that it is the age that forms the man, not the man the age. If Luther, we are told, had been born in the tenth century he would have effected no reformation ; if he had never been born at all, it is evident that the sixteenth century could not have elapsed without a great schism in the Church. Of Viscount Rhondda it would be true to say that he was both the product and the creator of his own environment. He had vicissitudes enough to modify any man's character, yet they left his essential nature just what it always was, except that the many illnesses from which he suffered made him more irritable and querulous.

If, on the whole, he must be considered as forming a class by himself, we cannot rightly estimate him apart from circumstances. True, no man of his time was more capable of achieving for himself a separate and independent power and renown ; yet his fame was partly due to the evolution of circumstances, and to the unexpected contingencies of the War—not to the sudden appearance and exercise of new and hitherto unknown faculties. He had in him naturally the elements of a great man ; he always was great ; but it was circumstances that

revealed, and enabled his contemporaries to see and appreciate his greatness; the War placed him in a situation in which his originality and talent for administration appeared to the best advantage.

Macaulay says that if the great William Pitt had been so fortunate as to die in 1792, his name would have been associated with peace, with freedom, with philanthropy, with reform, with mild and constitutional government, but he lived to see his name associated with arbitrary government, with harsh laws harshly executed, with alien bills, with gagging bills, with suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, with cruel punishments inflicted on political agitators, with unjustifiable prosecutions instituted against others, and with a costly and sanguinary war.

The converse is true of Viscount Rhondda. If he had been so unfortunate as to die in 1913, instead of 1918, he would not have died so full of honours, and the suspicions which were entertained in some quarters as to his intentions and motives and disposition, would still be clinging to his memory. Such suspicions, it is true, were confined to a limited number, but they were strongly held and publicly expressed. In spite of his great organizing and administrative abilities, certain traits of his character roused a suspicion, so did some of his actions. But public men are surrounded with so many difficulties and temptations that some doubt must almost always hang over their real motives and intentions. History has, however, vindicated him; he will go down to posterity not merely as a great industrial genius, but as a man of honest intentions

who had the welfare of the workers and of the community at heart.

"You have risen early, my Lord Abbot," said Owen Glyn Dwr to the Abbot of Valle Crucis. "It is you who have risen too early by a hundred years," said the priest to the patriot, who thus passed away from the sight of men with the dream of his life unfulfilled. Viscount Rhondda took life philosophically; it never troubled him whether he had been born too early or too late. He was a purposive forward-looking type of man, who grew up with the conviction that there were great and heroic deeds still waiting to be performed, and that progress must be step by step. Having this maxim in his mind, he resolved when young, and adhered to that resolve throughout life, to do the nearest and the smallest thing entrusted to him as well as he could, with the result that the space about him grew wider with the growth of years, with wider spheres of action and influence, with greater and heavier responsibilities, until at last he gained that ascendancy which a strong man must, sooner or later, gain.

Respecting our reference to the part played by the War in the making of Viscount Rhondda, it is interesting to note that it may be said of him as of Maximilian I. that he was born in the sound of war. Maximilian was cradled in the lap of war with cannon shots for lullabies. His first memories were of the perils and hardships of a soldier. The glimmer of armour and weapons was, we are told, the first thing that drew his attention, and while still in his nurse's arms, whenever he saw a dagger, he cried

until he could touch it with his hand. He promised when a lad to be worthy of the name Maximilian.

Unlike Maximilian, Viscount Rhondda was a man of peace, with a different ambition, though there is something akin in military and industrial geniuses. Viscount Rhondda was by instinct and temperament an oppositionist. He had a large fund of the aggressive and combative qualities to draw upon. When a boy he never took a blow without returning it, and he would never forget an injury done to himself. There was a big, robust fellow who was the bully of the school at Clifton, all the other boys were afraid of him ; but it was not long before his career was brought to an inglorious end by the young Ysguborwen boy, and for some time he was the hero of all the small boys in the school.

He was born March 26, 1856, the last year of the Crimean War. It was a red letter day in more than one sense in the history of Western Europe ; for two years, from 1854 to 1856, England had been in blood and tears. True, when the Parliamentary Session of 1856 began, peace was practically, though not formally, declared. It was in the month of March of that year—the month in which Viscount Rhondda was born, that the Peace Congress met in Paris. It is not unworthy of note that Mr. Henry Richard, who was first elected Member for the Parliamentary Borough of Merthyr at the General Election in November, 1868, and who was Member when Viscount Rhondda, then Mr. David Alfred Thomas, was first elected on March 14th, 1888, played an important part in the deliberations of the Peace

Congress at Paris. He was then Secretary of the Peace Society, and was greatly distressed by the horrors of the war, and especially the winter's campaign in the Crimea. He did not favour any war policy that had for its object the upholding of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. When the Peace Congress was sitting Mr. Richard induced Mr. Joseph Sturge and Mr. Charles Findlay, the Member for Ashton, to go with him to Paris to present a memorial to the several Powers, through their plenipotentiaries, urging that the interest of nations should be brought within the cognizance of certain fixed rules of right and justice. Lord Clarendon, upon whom the deputation waited at Paris, succeeded in getting the Congress to pass a resolution expressing a *qualified* disapproval of a resort to war. But in spite of the fact that both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Derby spoke of the resolution as a distinct step forward in the interests of international peace and civilization, Europe and England went on building ships and organizing armies as if nothing had happened ; and, although sixty-two years have passed since then, we are now in the midst of the greatest war in the history of the world, and if it is safe to predict at all, it is safe to predict that this war will not be the last.

Not only did the birth of Viscount Rhondda synchronize with the great anxiety and unrest caused by the Crimean War, and with the ferment in men's minds caused by the repeal of the Corn Laws and other movements, and the question of the "Condition of England" which had been stirring all serious people profoundly, it also synchronized with

a period of social and industrial unrest in Wales, and with a new era in the history of Wales. The Welsh people of those days had their own share of the general problem to deal with.

Workers from all parts of Wales, as well as from Scotland and Ireland, had been for years pouring like a stream into the wild sequestered valleys among the Glamorgan hills, where pits had been and were being, sunk, and iron works opened, and where there were no ready-made organizations or institutions of a social or educational character to meet their need; no, not even sanitary arrangements. True, wages ranged very high, food and fuel were cheap and plentiful, but the moral and social condition of the working population was deplorable. Some of the evils might have been avoided if the first founders of the system had been sensible of their duties and responsibilities, and had been less selfish. A wiser and more human policy has since prevailed, for which no small credit is due to Viscount Rhondda. He took a sympathetic and a practical interest in the social, educational, and religious welfare of the working population in the mining districts of South Wales.

Sixty years ago the Guests and Hills and Crawshays reigned supreme, and they were very rough in their dealings with their workmen, though they were in some respects kind and generous. Crawshay was not a religious man, though he patronized the clergy. He was a great admirer of the late Archdeacon Griffiths, of Neath, when he was at Nanty-glo. The managers, who lived some distance away, came to church in their "cubs," which were some

sort of trams which ran on rails, and there was quite a number of them outside the church during services on Sundays. In those days locomotion by road was very difficult and often impossible. Sunday was the day when Crawshay entertained his friends, but he always invited them to accompany him to the evening service and to hear the sermon of the young Welshman.

On one occasion Crawshay and his guests were seated in the family pew in front of the pulpit. It was evident that they had been imbibing rather freely of Crawshay's exhilarating wine, and their behaviour was not altogether reverent. Just when the preacher was at the height of an impassioned passage, one of Crawshay's guests, just awaking from his nap, struck the pew with his fist and shouted, "Another bottle of that '16 port, please; it is rather good stuff." We are told on the authority of the Rev. Peter Williams, vicar of Troedyrhiw, Merthyr, that Griffiths was so shocked that he went home and wept like a child, and he very soon afterwards left for Llansannor, near Cowbridge.

But those years were notable years in the history of Wales in other respects. The influence of the Renaissance movement was beginning to be felt. The Celtic revival, or the recognition of Welsh sub-nationality, was making headway; it was claimed that the apparatus of civil government should be better adapted to the needs of the Principality, and that a larger measure of self-government should be granted. The spirit of Democracy was spreading very rapidly over the entire nation. The question of religious equality was beginning to

agitate the public mind, and to assume a political form. Viscount Rhondda was a boy of twelve when, at the election of 1868, not less than twenty-two Members were returned to Parliament from Wales to support Welsh Disestablishment and Disendowment. That election signalized the rise of new political forces, the power and significance of which the leaders of the Church in Wales failed to understand, or rather ignored. New ideals were influencing the methods of education, with the result that the question of colleges and a degree-conferring University for Wales began to be ventilated.

It was argued, especially by those who had received a University education abroad, or at Oxford and Cambridge, that the old public schools of England, and the old Universities, provided the best education that could be given, and better than Wales could possibly provide. But they did not take into consideration the fact that the public schools of England and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were out of the reach of the majority of Welshmen. It was felt that an effort should be made to enable the Welsh to possess an education equal to that which was given to the people of Scotland and Ireland. Nowhere did method and spirit more urgently require a change in matters of education than in Wales.

During the period under discussion the bi-lingual movement in day-schools, that had its beginning generations before, was just taking its latest phase. The importance of the periodical literature in the growth of Nonconformity as a distinct force in the national life, was being recognized more and more.

There were long and acrid controversies over the questions of religious teaching in day-schools, Church Rates, and Government Grants for educational purposes. On every side there was a general awakening, and a general widening of interest concerning all matters that had to do with the progress and happiness of the nation.

These reflections are made in order to help the reader to find the atmosphere in which Viscount Rhondda was born and reared. They reveal not only the formative influences in the making of modern Wales, but in the making of Viscount Rhondda's character, political ideals and aspirations, and national sympathies. It would be too much to say that he had, in his youthful days, any very definite consciousness of what was actually going forward in him, but as he grew into manhood he discerned, and he publicly avowed that he discerned, it. The explanation of what affects a man's ideals, spirit and conduct, in his years of maturity, is to be found in his native constitution, in the experience of his childhood, in the pressure of his age and of social influences—for man, from beginning to end, is a social being.

"Put a child," says Dr. Angell, of the University of Chicago, "into a group of religious ascetics to grow up and the chances are that the only interests which will really get opportunity to live and thrive will be those which are conformable to the ideals of such a community. On the other hand, let him be cast among pirates, and a totally different group of interests will blossom forth. This is not because the child is a hypocrite. It is simply because one of the most universal of all objects of spontaneous attention is found in the attitudes and actions of those among whom we live. A certain amount of repression from them may not stifle a

vigorous interest. But many a taste which might in a kinder social climate take root and bring forth rich fruit, dies ere it is fairly planted."

Viscount Rhondda was just about the average youth ; he exhibited those characteristics which are peculiar to youths in general. The only abnormal thing about him was, that at the age of four he was so fat that if he fell to the ground he could not rise again ; he had to be lifted up. His early environment was a somewhat worldly one, for his father was entirely engrossed in material affairs ; it was from his father that he inherited his commercial and speculative instinct. Even in his boyhood days, if he saw a chance of making anything he would not let it pass. Indeed, his whole life as a business man pointed in the same direction. The money-making talent he inherited from his father and his ancestors, and he cultivated it with great advantage to himself. But the fact that he became a millionaire is no proof, as some suppose, that he was unscrupulous, any more than the fact that a man is poor is a guarantee that he is a saint. Every man would be a millionaire if he knew how, and he would have no scruples or pangs of conscience about it.

We have seen it stated, more than once, that when the news of his appearance in the world was communicated to his father at the pithead, his comment was, " Well, I do not know what is to become of him ; there is only the workhouse before him." It is true that Mr. Samuel Thomas was embarrassed financially at the time of Viscount Rhondda's birth, partly through losses caused by others, into the details of which we need not enter here ; partly

because his resources had been so heavily taxed in colliery undertakings. But his embarrassment was only temporary. Indeed, there was no reason why he should take such a gloomy view of the situation ; but many colliery speculators in that district had been ruined before those days, and some were ruined in later days, while others to whom they were obligated built fortunes on their ruins. As a rule, he kept a good balance at his Merthyr bank ready for emergencies. There was no bank in Aberdare when he began to speculate. He died intestate, but he left £75,000, the Ysguborwen Colliery, and five-sixths of the Cambrian Collieries, which were shared between his widow and his five children.

But Mr. Samuel Thomas was not at the pithead when Viscount Rhondda was born ; he was at home. It was a wild, stormy night in the month of March, 1856, which was a leap year. It was the wildest and stormiest that had been known for years. Mr. J. H. Thomas, Viscount Rhondda's only surviving brother, was then three years and two months old, he having been born on January 11th, 1853, in a small cottage on the side of Cardiff Road, Aberdare, the cottage in which some say that Viscount Rhondda was born. It is now a public-house, and called the Full Moon. Mr. J. H. Thomas has a very vivid recollection of the excitement at Ysguborwen on that night, and of seeing his father dressing and hurrying to fetch Dr. David Davies, of Bryngolwg, Aberdare. Having thoroughly investigated the conflicting statements respecting the place of Viscount Rhondda's birth, we are satisfied that he was born at Ysguborwen. We have seen the birth certificates of both Viscount Rhondda and of his brother, Mr. J. H. Thomas.

There were always apprehensions concerning Viscount Rhondda's health ; he was often ill, sometimes seriously ill. He had rheumatic fever before he went, at the age of ten, to Manila Hall, Clifton, where Dr. Hudson was headmaster. He was there for about nine years, from 1866 to March, 1875. In February, 1871, he met with a serious accident ; he fell and injured his knee by jumping over some railings. An operation was performed in London, when a decayed bone was taken out of his injured knee. He did not get well until late in the autumn, and did not return to school until the following February, so that he lost a whole year at the Clifton school in consequence.

In the year 1875, when he left Clifton, it was found that his heart was affected as a result of an attack of rheumatic fever. The London specialist who examined him said that he had diabetes, but if so, he grew out of it. He gained a scholarship at Jesus College, Cambridge, but he was obliged to go abroad in consequence of an attack of rheumatic fever. While abroad at Clermont Ferrand, he contracted typhoid fever, but he managed to get back as far as Folkestone ; he was then ordered by his medical adviser to throw up his scholarship and take things easy.

In October, 1876, he went to Gonville College, Cambridge, but was told by a London specialist not to work too hard. Later he secured a scholarship at Caius College, Cambridge ; and were it not for his indifferent health he would have been very nearly Senior Wrangler, as Mr. J. W. Welsford, a fellow student, who was fifth Wrangler in his year, had

always been beaten by him. But they were always on very friendly terms. Mr. Welsford was appointed mathematical master at Harrow, going there direct from Cambridge. Viscount Rhondda's degree was Senior Optimi in Mathematical Tripos. It was his delicate health that prevented him carrying his studies in mathematics further than he did.

The stock of learning which he laid up during this part of his life was practically all that he ever possessed, for he soon became too busy with business affairs to have any spare time for further studies. His liking for mathematics amounted to a passion which, on account of indifferent health, needed to be checked rather than encouraged. But his proficiency in classical learning was not commensurate with his proficiency in mathematics. Even his knowledge of English literature was very limited; so was his acquaintance with many of the great English authors. Like many other men absorbed in business, he was not a lover of books. He was, while at Cambridge, as he was throughout his public life, a glutton for work; and his mental capacity in general was very highly esteemed; but to modern literature he paid very little attention. While at Cambridge he made but few friends, and, with one or two exceptions, what friendships he made he did not retain.

"Blessed are they," said a distinguished *littérateur* of the Renaissance period, "in whose bosom beats the heart of a lamb and not of a lion, because meekness is the manna of the soul and pride is the poison which puffs up the body." But it was the heart of a lion and not of a lamb that beat in the bosom of Viscount Rhondda, even while at Cambridge. His

spirit was proud, imperious, and querulous, and it made him conspicuous among his fellow students. He was naturally more or less fractious, but something, indeed much, must be attributed to his poor health. After the attack of rheumatic fever in 1875, he became much more irritable and close-fisted. Then, and in later years, he would quarrel with his friends and his relations. It is not an uncommon thing to find the peevishness of an invalid venting itself even on those who alleviate the pain. This is a law of association, from the operation of which even minds the most strictly regulated by reason are not wholly exempt.

He was a believer in physical training or culture, and a keen sportsman ; he rowed in the first college boat at Cambridge and at Henley Regatta ; but he was always at loggerheads with the boat captains. For some years he was rowing correspondent to the *London Daily News*, and his caustic criticisms caused considerable commotion in the local clubs at Cambridge. He twice won the distance diving and light-weight boxing open to the whole University.

In this connection the following story is very interesting. One evening he met a friend at Aberdare while he was making his way to Ysguborwen. "Come with me along the Tresalem tramroad," said he to his friend. After walking some distance, his friend said to him, "They say that there are robbers along this tramroad, and that they have their eye on such men as yourself. But then, you are a champion with your fist." Viscount Rhondda answered, "I am not quite so sure about that ; but as for diving, I have never yet met anyone who

would dive deeper than myself or who could remain longer in the water." Our authority for this story is the Rev. D. Silyn Evans, Congregational minister, Aberdare, who knew Viscount Rhondda very well. He related it in his obituary notice in the *Y Tyst* as an apt illustration of Viscount Rhondda's character ; he dived into the dark depths below, and remained there out of sight of the world longer than was usually the case, before coming to the surface to show himself.

" It would have been happy for himself and for his country," said Macaulay of the great William Pitt, who had made himself the most powerful subject in Europe before he was twenty-five, " if his elevation had been deferred eight or ten years, during which he would have had leisure and opportunity for reading and reflection, for foreign travel, for social intercourse and free exchange of thought on equal terms with a great variety of companions, it would have supplied what, without any fault on his part, was wanting to his powerful intellect." The reverse is true in the case of Viscount Rhondda. His elevation had been too long deferred, but when his hour came, to no other man of his age could it be more appropriately said, " Friend, go up higher."

That Viscount Rhondda felt he had cause to be grateful for the training he had received at Cambridge is shown by the provision which he made in his will for the following payments — " To the Governing Body of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, the sum of £20,000, on condition that the same shall be applied by the said Governing Body in their discretion for the benefit of the said

college, but preferably in the establishment and maintenance of six to ten scholarships, tenable at the said college for mathematics, natural science or moral science (including economics), preference being given (*ceteris paribus*) in the awarding of such scholarships to residents or sons of residents in Wales or Monmouthshire."

When he went to Cambridge in 1875, he was not attached to any College, but he had a Coach. He was going one day for a ride with a Caius man. He rode up to the gates of Caius College, where he subsequently found the Caius horse waiting but not the rider. D. A. Thomas, as he was then known, rode down the Senate House passage and entered Caius College on horseback, riding through the gates of honour—a sacrilege unknown in the history of the College—into the old Caius Court, to the great consternation of the Dons, who looked out through their windows wondering what the strange spectacle meant. This incident caused a great deal of excitement, and enquiries were made as to which College he belonged.

In 1879 he quarrelled with Dr. Norman Ferrers, the Senior Tutor of Caius College. Ferrers seems to have been the Terror of the tutors of the other Colleges in Cambridge. As the result of this quarrel "D. A." tried to migrate to Downing College, then the home of "lost dogs," but the Downing College authorities were so much afraid of Ferrers that "D. A." enjoyed the unique distinction of having been refused at Downing, he being the only man ever known to be refused.

He left Cambridge in February, 1880, for Cardiff,

his father having died the previous year. At Cardiff he joined Mr. Osborn Henry Riches in the sale department of the Cambrian Collieries. He subsequently went to Clydach Vale to learn the underground part of the business, and he resided there. In 1882 he married Miss Sibyl Margaret Haig, daughter of Mr. George Augustus Haig, of Penithon, near Newtown, in the county of Radnor. Mr. George Augustus Haig was a descendant of an ancient Scottish family—the Haighs of “Bennerside.” He contested three Parliamentary elections in Radnorshire, once in the Conservative interests, and twice as an independent candidate. The Dowager Viscountess Rhondda is a cousin of Sir Douglas Haig, the present Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in France, and a further relation exists through the marriage of her eldest brother—the late Mr. C. E. Haig—to Sir Douglas Haig’s sister. Viscount Rhondda and his eldest surviving brother, Mr. J. H. Thomas, married two sisters.

Viscountess Rhondda, previously known as Lady Mackworth, the wife of Sir Humphrey Mackworth, of Oaklands, Caerleon, Monmouthshire, was born in 1883. She appears to have inherited in a large measure her father’s business and organizing ability. It is said that she is chairman of not less than seven limited companies, and director of five others, including most of the colliery companies in which Viscount Rhondda was interested prior to his acceptance of office in the Government. Viscount Rhondda was greatly attached to his daughter. She was with him when the *Lusitania* was sunk; and we can more easily imagine than describe his

feelings when he discovered that she, like himself, had been saved.

In the autumn of 1882 Viscount Rhondda left Cardiff to reside in London, where he went into a stockbroker's office. On the death of Mr. Osborn Henry Riches he returned to Cardiff. Meanwhile he had resided near Sevenoaks, where he had another attack of rheumatic fever.

During his residence in this district he kept a few hundred bee-hives—his favourite hobby at one time. A certain farmer, who complained that the bees trespassed on his land, and grazed on his flowers, demanded "damages" or "rent," which "D. A." refused. So the farmer planted peppermint, which naturally spoilt the honey, with the result that "D. A." gave up keeping bees on the same scale after he went to Llanwern.

In 1887 he took a lease of Llanwern House, near Newport, where he resided until his death. While at Llanwern he had another attack of rheumatic fever, and an exceedingly severe attack of influenza in 1893, which nearly killed him. He had suffered for years from heart trouble, and had been known to faint and fall off his chair. Latterly, when at home, he was a vegetarian; but when from home he enjoyed a good dinner. He was always in good form after attending a coal-owners' meeting, because a good luncheon was provided.

He was very fond of hunting, and used to hunt with the Glôge-Llanwynno hounds, also the Rhondda hounds, and later the Llangybi hounds. His favourite recreations were walking, bird-nesting and farming, particularly the breeding of prize Here-

ford cattle. He was twice president of the Hereford Herd Society, and he held the record for having realized the highest price for a Hereford in the annals of British farming. This distinction was gained at Hereford in March, 1918, when 1,450 guineas were paid for his yearling "Reformer." He was the second largest landowner in Monmouthshire, his estate including Pencoed as well as the Llanwern and other properties. He was extremely popular as a landowner. When the Pencoed (Perry-Herrick) estate came into the market a few years ago, he was in America, but the tenants petitioned him to acquire it.

Some months before his death his many friends and admirers in the Borough of Merthyr were making preparation for a series of functions in his honour. They intended presenting him with a gold casket to contain his Scroll of Freedom, but on account of his illness, in the month of April, the ceremony was postponed. He received the Freedom of the City of Cardiff in 1916, in recognition of his gift of statuary for the City Hall. In acknowledging the compliment he related the following story about himself: "I was told after my return home that a placard of a local newspaper the day following the announcement of the *Lusitania* disaster ran as follows: 'Great National Disaster. D. A. saved.'" Another good story has been circulated on the authority of Mr. Clement Edwards, M.P. When the *Lusitania* was sunk off the Irish coast by a German submarine in 1916, Mr. Edwards, while touring his constituency, met an aged collier at Mountain Ash. "Old D. A.," Mr. Edwards remarked, "has gone at

last." But the aged collier was incredulous ; he shook his head and replied, " I will wait till to-morrow. He always comes out on top, and I promise you this : he will come to the top of the water again with a big fish in each of his hands." If fame had not always been fair to Viscount Rhondda, fortune was undoubtedly his friend.

He returned from London to Llanwern Park on Thursday, March 28th (the day before Good Friday), and was obliged to take to his bed, with what was regarded as a chill. Something akin to influenza developed, accompanied, or followed, by single pneumonia, though he, unfortunately, still devoted a considerable part of his time to the work of his own Government department. But complications ensued, and he became very much weaker. He tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister, but, unfortunately, it was not accepted, so that he continued to work, though an invalid. In the month of May there was an improvement, and he spent a few hours daily in the grounds at Llanwern, reading official correspondence and working. He was supposed to be convalescent ; but pleural effusion appeared, which had to be removed by operation. He was again obliged to take to his bed, though, strange to relate, he was still allowed to work. But when his medical attendants discovered that there was serious heart trouble in addition to pleural effusion, they compelled him to give up all thought of work.

When he was taken ill at the end of March he was visited by his London adviser, Dr. Beckett Overy. Sir Thomas Horder, consulting physician, was called

in later ; Sir Bertrand Dawson, one of the Court physicians, also paid a visit to Llanwern ; his local adviser was Dr. Morel Thomas, of Newport. He was quite conscious up to the Tuesday evening before his death ; though he fully realized how dangerously ill he was, he conversed cheerfully with his relatives, all of whom were with him at the end. He died during sleep, perhaps painlessly, at eight o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, July 3rd, 1918, at the age of sixty-two. On the following day his body was taken to London in charge of his son-in-law, Sir Humphrey Mackworth, Bart., and Mr. Robert Richards, his estate agent, for cremation at Golders Green ; this being his long-standing wish. On the following Saturday the ashes were interned at Llanwern Parish Church amid many manifestations of very deep sorrow.

Simultaneously with the funeral, a memorial service was held at St. Margaret's, Westminster, the official church of Parliament. The services were conducted by Canon Carnegie, who read an abbreviated version of the Burial Service, the service being brought to a close with the hymn "Now the labourer's task is o'er" and the National Anthem. Practically all the members of the Government were present, and included in the congregation were many notabilities, members of both houses of Parliament, representatives of the French and United States Governments, and of the Dominions and Colonies. The King was represented by Lord Annalay, Queen Alexandra by Earl Howe, and the Duke of Connaught by Lieut.-Col. Sir Malcolm Murray. There is no heir to the title, but a special

remainder was recently granted Viscount Rhondda's only daughter, Lady Mackworth, who assumes the title of Viscountess Rhondda.

If we count age by years, Viscount Rhondda was not old when he died ; he was only sixty-two. But we judge the worth of a man's life not by its length, but by the degree of personality he throws into it—by its plans, its ideals, its utility, and by its radiant benefactions and heroic self-sacrifices. Lincoln died when he was fifty-six, but he accomplished more than Methuselah ever did. Judged by the same standard, Viscount Rhondda lived a long life, for he lived much. When the last call came he responded and kept his courage to the end. Having accomplished a great work in his lifetime, he crowned it by dying like a brave man.

CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER AND TEMPERAMENT

THERE is no word, except perhaps the word conscience, which has been so grievously misconceived and misapplied as the word character. There is a superficial view which looks upon character as something fixed and apart from its manifestations, and there is an equally superficial view which looks upon what is called conscience as an infallible moral guide. The truth is that conscience often acts contrary to reason, to justice, and to the laws of humanity; it has committed in the *name* of religion the most heinous of crimes; it has burned many a saint of God, and has sent many a "heretic" to the rack. It is calculated that there are about one hundred and fifty religious organizations, and all of them founded on conscience. The Church has tried conscience for many ages, marking its path with blood, and with more separations than even civil governments cause.

The truth is that what is commonly called conscience is not in, or by, itself, a moral guide; on the contrary, it needs a standard or a moral ideal set up before it. The parent sets it up for the child, and the community for the citizen. Something has of recent years been said about the Nonconformist

conscience, which means the sum of the individual moral and civic standard of those religious bodies, but the Nonconformist conscience is one, the Anglican conscience another, and the Roman Catholic conscience another. Each has its own dogma, its own superstitions, its own authority in religion, and its own paraphernalia of externalism in religion, which it often substitutes for religion itself. Indeed, so great and persistent has been the use and the abuse of the word, that there is an increasing disposition among psychologists to disregard the use of the term.

It is held by some philosophers that the foundation of religion consists in the dictates of what is called conscience. But its dictates are conditional, and often narrow, oppressive, and mischievous in proportion to its intensity. Its verdict depends, to some extent at any rate, upon the evidence ; but the evidence may be incomplete or untrustworthy. Its verdict more often than not takes a colouring from its own prejudices, training and education, and conscience is a matter of education. It often shows a curious credulity with respect to the evidence on the one side, and a watchful scepticism with regard to the evidence on the other. It arrives at a theory from looking at some of the phenomena, and strains, curtails or distorts the remaining phenomena to suit the theory ; so that it asserts as true what is false, and as false what is true.

Conscience is not a separate faculty ; it is an endowment, and its complexion depends upon its culture. It is not infallible as an arbiter of right and

wrong, and its moral value, as well as the direction in which it moves, is, as we have already said, a question of education. It often happens that it is educated or enlightened on the one side of character, while it is uneducated and unenlightened on the other. Thus it is that a man will sometimes violate the law of truthfulness without compunction, and even plead justification for it, while he regards violation of the law of purity as the most heinous of sins.

A similar difficulty attends the discussion of the subject of character ; a wide door is open for misconception, especially when we deal with the factors that affect it. No science has been so imperfectly studied as the science of character, or the science of Ethology, the sister science of Ethnology. This is due probably to the fact that character is so difficult of analysis, and that while its actions and peculiarities may be traced, its source, or motor power, has so far defied discovery. The study of character has to do with unknown factors, with hereditary endowments and incorporated habits, the origin of which, and the nature of whose influence can perhaps never be traced,

The study of ethics is perhaps the nearest approach we have at present to a science of character, without actually being this in any sense. But it is allied to it, and the relation of ethics to character is an interesting study. Ethics is the abstract science of those activities of the human soul which are termed moral, and morals is the applied science which deals with the same activities. The character is the product of the art of morals, realized in a living human personality. Ethics is the science of morals, and the

difference between this and character is that between the abstract and the applied. Ethics are the principles of our moral activities, investigated and systematized by reason and intellect. Morals are, however, not founded upon reason or intellect, they spring from the law of God without, and the moral sense within.

Every human being has a rudimentary moral sense, and the adjustment of his conduct to the moral relations which he naturally feels should exist between himself and his environment, constitutes his character. While morals and religion seem to be distinct, they are united in the common object. But Christianity has a distinct circle of ideas that are not included in any form of ethics, and they are partly based on the moral sense, but in reality they transcend its sphere. This circle of Christian ideas includes a sense of sin, and a scheme of redemption from sin through faith in the Person of Christ. So that Christian ethics become necessarily a compound of ethics and religion. We cannot, or should not, separate them, though there is evidence that religion is gradually passing into a recognition of ethical precepts and a graceful habit of morality. It is so, to a large extent, in Wales.

Ethics have less effect on character than religion, and do not mould character as religion does, partly for the reason that ethics are purely intellectual and do not affect the emotions; consequently they have not the same vital force as religion. While morals may exist apart from religion, it should be emphasized that religion without morality is dead, and that in spite of all the emotion

it may excite. The merit of a Christian life is not primarily in its outward righteousness, but in the purity and integrity of the inward motives.

Some say that personality is character, but they are distinct and distinctive. By personality we mean a man's psychical characteristics which, as Professor William James says, "give the peculiar shape to his metamorphoses." Character differs from temperament, for its basis is moral, but the basis of temperament is physical. Both personality and temperament are factors in the formation of character.

It is thought by some that character depends upon one's ancestry, that it is inherited. Robert Owen of Newtown, who was born on the 14th May, 1771, and who was one of the most noted men in the sphere of industry, politics and education that Wales ever produced, abandoned his profession of religion at an early age. In 1817 he explained that he had been influenced by the fact that religion, or the exponents of religion, taught that a man's character was made by himself, rather than for him. He held the twofold belief that a man's character was derived from nature and heredity, and that his public life was moulded by circumstances. His views were distasteful even to many of his friends and supporters, but he held firmly to his opinions, though he did not pretend to be a judge in religious dogma, and he had no hatred of old creeds. The evil effect of holding men responsible for their opinions he studied in the light of the grim story of religious wars and sectarian persecutions. Indeed, he regarded persecution, or social ostracism on the ground of difference of creed,

as by far a more serious crime than any possible error in doctrine. He had learned how the infallibility of one conscience sought to exterminate by torture and death the infallibility of another. His belief was that a man's religious opinions were not under his own control, neither was his character.

John Stuart Mill held the opposite view. "It is a grand error," he says, "to believe that our character is formed *for* us rather than *by* us. It is formed by circumstances, but the desire to mould it in any way is one of these circumstances."

"Man," says Carlyle, "is the architect of circumstances. He is indeed often the creator, rather than the creature, of circumstances."

It is clear that what we inherit is not character, but physical tendencies which are developed by actions and circumstances, and which in process of time become by force of habit automatic and subconscious. Heredity only lays the foundation of character; that is, the foundation of reason and emotions; the merit or demerit of character lies in conscious deeds, or in the exercise of choice, though deeds may emanate from subconscious sources, and, therefore, possess neither moral merit nor demerit.

Some authorities claim that character is *limited* by heredity, which means that growth beyond the highest point reached by heredity is impossible, and that the character of the stock cannot be modified, improved or enriched. It is equivalent to saying that no new ideas can be added to the stock, that there can be no change in the instincts, that no fresh grafts can be added to the stock, and no new principle assimilated.

In the first instance character *does* depend upon heredity, that is, upon the tendencies inherited ; but no man is responsible for the tendencies which he inherits, or for the potentialities that form the foundation of character. He is not responsible for the character of the stock from which he descends ; he is only responsible for what he adds to or takes away from it, and for the manner in which he applies his inheritance.

The offspring receives from the parent certain possessions, viz. his body, mind, disposition and individuality, but not his character. Neither does the offspring receive from the parent *definite* vices or *definite* virtues ; whether the tendencies which he inherits become vices or virtues depends on the formation of the mind and will power. Those tendencies may naturally incline towards evil or good, but whether they will develop into evil or good depends not upon heredity, but upon example, education, contact with other characters, current thoughts and ideas, mental atmosphere, and largely upon what the unconscious mind preserves and nurtures.

This partly explains why children of the same parents differ in character and disposition and individuality from their parents, and by their individuality we mean their outstanding peculiarity or the leading quality of their personality. It also explains the fact that all the children of the same parent are not possessed of a similar disposition or individuality ; and that the same causes or motives affect them differently.

It is interesting to note the manner in which a

man's character is often judged or estimated. It is judged or estimated by his relations, marriage, children, personal appearance, temperament, business, his pictures and books, and very often by his feelings rather than by his will and his power of self-restraint. But a man may be strong in feeling and weak in character. It is by a man's capacity to control and subdue his feelings that we are to judge the strength of his character.

A man is often given a character solely on the ground of some protruding peculiarity, or some happy or unhappy episode in his career, or some singularity of conduct or public opinion. Sometimes, the public selects a leading characteristic in a man's character and regards the rest of the man in that light. Sometimes it selects a single act or single achievement as a fundamental and permanent feature of his character. Sometimes, a man is wholly depreciated because of a temporary lapse, though he may have to his credit many excellent attributes which his critics lack, and which atone for his temporary failure or indiscretion. A man's character is often better than his reputation, or his reputation may be better than his character. The latter lives in a man, the former outside him. In forming an estimate of a man's character a just balance should be struck between his weak and strong qualities, and the qualities that preponderate should be made to stand for his character. This is what we mean by character, man in the totality of his being or conduct. He should, therefore, be judged, not in the light of one or two or more attributes in their isolation, but in the light of his life as a whole.

The strength and value of a man's character does not consist in the excellence or attractiveness of the different traits or attributes that constitute it ; and it is as unsafe as it is unfair to view them singly or separately. They should be viewed in their harmonious combination and in their collective expression. The principle of selecting an unfortunate incident, or a defective element in the career or character of an individual, and then judging and estimating him in the light of that incident or element, is as false and as unjust as the principle of selecting an unsavoury feature in the social habits of a race and judging the morals and the civilization of the race in that light.

The conventional moralist, not being a psychologist, knows nothing of relative strength and weakness, or of relative good and evil ; when judging others, though not when judging himself, or as he desires to be judged, his standard is that of absolute moral judgment ; he thinks only of his own measure of right and wrong, and as applied to others, not to himself ; into antecedent cause or causes, or sudden emergencies, or overwhelming sorrows, or difficulties, he does not enter. So limited is his knowledge of psychology and of human nature, so circumscribed is his mental vision, that he does not know that the unconscious will sometimes surprises and overcomes the conscious will, even when the conscious will is allied with a good character ; or that the force of character is not so absolute as to make it impossible for a man of good character and good intentions to make a mistake ; or that the will is not always determined by the character, and that

the working of character in a given action is not always at the control of the will.

The conventional moralist is unable to differentiate between a wrong act which is pre-determined by character, and which is a repetition of other and similar wrong acts, and a wrong act which is not pre-determined by character, but which is the fruit of sudden impulses and other circumstances, and which can be truly said to be a violation of the individual's real self, and which, on reflection, the individual's moral sense does not endorse.

This, however, does not exonerate the individual ; he is morally responsible for his action. But the best man is capable, and is daily guilty, of doing things that do not concur with his character, and which he condemns and regrets the moment they are done. What a man does is not always what he is, partly for the reason that his judgment is often defeated by his instinct. This is true not merely of ill-trained or ill-educated men, or of men who are morally weak, but of well-trained and well-educated men, and of men who are morally strong.

Some characters express themselves so differently at times as to seem contradictory. Jekyll and Hyde often inhabit the same person, and they govern and obey alternately ; they are often in opposition so that it is difficult to reconcile the two sorts of conduct, and to believe that the two sides of the same character belong to the same person. We remember Wendell Holmes' *Three Johns*, the real John, the John as seen by others, and the John as seen by himself. On this being explained by the "Autocrat" to the astonished John, he ate three breakfasts, one in honour of each.

We sometimes hear it said of a certain person that he was the last man in the world one would have thought capable of doing a certain thing. The truth is, we cannot predict of any man, however well balanced his judgment, or however well blended his qualities, that he is certain to act in such a manner, or that his actions are certain to be in keeping with his character. His action may be as much of a surprise to himself as to his friends or neighbours. No man knows what he is capable of doing, or how he will act under certain and unknown conditions, until the time of testing comes. Thus it is that there are many actions that cannot rightly be said to form an essential part of character ; they are the result of passing influences, or of temporary inclinations.

All sins are not of the same character. There are besetting and unbesetting sins ; the former have become habitual and automatic, they cannot be uprooted ; the individual has only to get on the best he can, and the public has only to tolerate them. The unbesetting sins are the sins that are unnatural to the individual and that are not in accord with the general bent of his character ; sins which he did not anticipate and for which he was not prepared. Such sins are far more grievous in their results. Robertson of Brighton truly says that the errors or sins which have most truly determined a man's destiny have been the result of mistakes, due to inexperience or excess of trust, or incaution or even to generous devotion.

No man can say what he may or may not do, for no man can forecast his own trial or the form in

which that trial will come. It may come totally unexpectedly and sweep over his soul like a tornado ; or it may come gradually and elusively, when he has not his armour on. So we must judge others as we would have others judge us and by the same rule that we apply to ourselves. This is not only the law of charity but the law of justice.

A man strong in will power may, under certain conditions, become malleable and unstable ; a man normally sensitive to the dictates of morality may swerve abruptly from the path of rectitude, making havoc of his life ; a man usually heroic may become timid and cowardly. Most men, whatever their inheritance, or however well educated, or whatever their position in life, are an intermediate mixture of strength and weakness. Few, if any, there are of whom it may be said, that their impulses have always been consistent with one another, that their will has always followed the guidance of their intellect, or that they have never shown a relative deficiency of character by the excessive indulgence of one particular faculty at the expense of another, or that they have not been inconsistent in the application of their feelings or passions. David forgave Saul *many* injuries, but for *one* injury which he received at the hands of Nabal he sought to revenge his injury with "naked steel." What is tolerated in the case of one is not tolerated in the case of another. An error committed by one is condoned or forgiven, but when committed by another it is neither condoned nor forgiven. It is this discordancy in human character which is habitual rather than exceptional, that makes an analysis, and a just and a complete

estimate, of its motives and manifestations so difficult.

Cæsar was ambitious and vainglorious, but he was also valiant and wise. Vespasian was covetous, but he was a worthy prince. Hannibal had many vices, but he also had some mighty virtues. So great and so distinct are the intermingling of the weak and the strong, the low and the high qualities in most men, that they may be said to possess two distinct personalities. They are like turning pictures ; on one side fair, wise and praiseworthy ; on the other ugly, foolish and faulty. The greatest good or all the good, the greatest evil or all the evil, in a man is not revealed in a single act ; it is not always shown in his conduct, and there are some faults so allied to virtues that we cannot isolate them without eliminating the virtues. Not only is the good in a man's character not wholly in sight of the public, it is not in the sight of its possessor. If it were it would mean the possession of true and complete self-knowledge, which is an impossible achievement. It is difficult for a man not only to analyze the motives of others, but his own ; and motives form an essential part of character. The deeper and stronger and more complex the character, the more difficult it is to make a just or an accurate estimate of it, and it takes a longer time. The more showy and shallow the character the more attractive it is, and the easier it is to estimate it.

But the conventional moralist makes no allowance for human frailty ; he does not distinguish between circumstances. For the scattered fragments of our ruined nature he has nothing but

anathemas. He lives in the age of Donatism when the Church refused the grace of repentance to those who had erred, on the ground that privileges once forfeited could never be regained and that for a single distinct relapse there could be no restoration. This extreme severity is as mischievous as the opposite extreme, which lays the whole blame on impetuous impulses, evil associations and hereditary tendencies. The lesson of history is, that in every human character and transaction, as Macaulay says, there is a mixture of good and evil ; " a little exaggeration, a little suppression, which may easily make a saint of Laud or a tyrant of Henry the Fourth."

Some men have the reputation of being good because they have not been really tempted, or have not been tempted where they are vulnerable. Henry Ward Beecher once said that it was not necessary, so far as he himself was concerned, to enact a law against theft and to penalize it, for he was not likely to put his hands in any man's pockets ; in this respect, at any rate, he was above the law. What he meant was that he was in bondage to the principle of honesty. Here he was invulnerable. This, however, does not prove that he was, any more than any other mortal man, invulnerable on other sides of his character, but it shows the momentous significance for the individual and society of deeply embedded habits of a moral kind, and the earlier they are embedded the better, for the later in life a moral habit is grafted the easier it is to break it ; the testimony of experience is that it is the first to give way. Thus it is that some individuals are placed at

a disadvantage in life and made vulnerable where they might otherwise be strong, even invincible.

The altitude of character is founded on its symmetry, or the balance and completeness of all the moral and intellectual parts. Symmetry is a condition of intensity, and one of the elements of symmetrical personal intensity is self-mastery and a combination of thought and action suitable to that purpose, conjoined to an inflexible will. No essential faculty, whether it be the faculty of organization, of leadership, or of administration, could possibly be too strong, but to keep life steady and the balance even, other faculties equally strong must be made to co-operate. It is this balance, this equilibrium, this intersphering or unity of action between the will and the feeling, the intellect and the sympathies, the power of authority and the sense of justice, that constitutes strength of character. It is the absence of this balance that makes a character one-sided. A small symmetrical man is worth more to himself and to society than a lop-sided giant.

Beecher once compared man to a many-bladed knife. One uses one blade, and another another blade. Each has only skill enough to utilize one. All the others are shut down inside the handle; they are useless. But man should be trained to open and use every one of the blades. The highly developed and well-balanced man is to have fitness and adaptation to call up any one of his faculties to perform the task which has been assigned to him. Here we see character in its noblest and most weighty form; that is in equipoise of development, fertilizing with good feeling for others, with aspira-

tion after usefulness, with a sense of obligation to both man and God, and surcharged with sympathy for the weak, the oppressed and the fallen.

From one point of view, the development of character is never complete; there is no age at which it may be said to cease to respond to motives both good and evil. It is not so with our bodily habits, such as habits of personal cleanliness, which are practically determined during childhood; our personal manners and standard of dress, tone of voice, and mode of enunciation are commonly fixed before twenty-one, our general attitude towards moral and religious ideals, or our moral and religious habits, as they are called, are decided during adolescence. Professional habits are acquired later. For the average individual the dominant tone or disposition of his habits, his social, moral and intellectual characteristics, are substantially fixed by the time he is thirty. At that time it may be said, generally speaking, that his desires and interests have been finally formed. This does not imply that there will be no changes in or elaboration of this stock of tendencies. Change of environment, or of circumstances, may cause the individual to be sensitive to the need for readjustment.

But character is constantly forming and re-forming; like the brain it is capable of developing down to a late period of life. True, character is more fixed in the old than in the young, or middle-aged. The older a man gets the more difficult it is to alter his character and temperament. Character is more fixed in the old than in the young, or middle-aged, partly for the reason that the character of his life

and surroundings are more fixed. By that time home, occupation and the plans of life, have been determined. No new friends or acquaintances are made. This is what makes the aged man better fitted for carrying on routine and mechanical work. Old age is the season for rest and contemplation ; youth is the season of unrest, the brooding time of speculation, the waiting time of adventure. Old age is the time to look backward, youth is the time to look forward ; old age is the time to conserve energy, youth is the time for throwing away energy ; to the old man existence is a reality, to the young it is a dream.

But, broadly speaking, experience presents new aspects of life to the individual in consequence of which he is constantly engaged in slightly adjusting his modes of thought, conduct, and his attitude towards certain theories and questions, and towards life in general. As life goes on there is a change of interests, and, therefore, a change of ideas and plans and energies.

Men are known to have undergone a change, not only in the manifestation of their character, but even in the character itself, on being transferred from one climate or one situation to another, or from a subordinate to a superior position ; and by changes of character we mean a change in habits of thought, in ideas, in ambition, in morality, and in the whole trend of their life. " When the President of the United States," says the late Professor William James, the eminent psychologist, " goes with paddle, gun and fishing-rod, camping in the wilderness for a vacation, he changes his system of

ideas from top to bottom. The Presidential anxieties have lapsed into the background entirely; the official habits are replaced by the habits of a son of nature, and those who knew the man only as the strenuous magistrate would not know him for the same person if they saw him as the camper. If, now, he should never go back, and never again suffer political interests to gain dominion over him, he would be for practical purposes a permanently transformed being."

It may be argued that it is merely an illustration of a change or modification in the *manifestation* of character, not in the character itself. Indeed, it is held by some that a real change of character is essentially impossible. This is equivalent to saying that a virtuous man is in absolute bondage to his righteousness, and that a vicious man is in absolute bondage to his viciousness. It is obvious that to break off a bad habit, or to renounce an evil life, means not only a reformatory habit of mind, but a complete change in certain parts of the nervous system. True, this is frequently a thing of utmost difficulty of attainment. The effort to break off pernicious habits of long standing is often pitiable to behold; such habits are often permanent; and what is true of moral is also true of intellectual habits.

It is certainly a solemn thought that the nervous tissues are daily storing up the results of our actions, and that a time may come—at what stage in life none can say definitely—when no amount of pious resolutions can redeem us from our folly and even from the sway of the habit from which we wish to

escape. Yet there have been men who have succeeded in loosening the grip of a bad habit, not by slow stages but at once. We could quote numerous examples from the last Welsh Revival. Some, it is true, lapsed, but the transformation was in many instances absolute and permanent. It was not a change or a mere modification in the manifestation of character, but a revolution, and without warning or anticipation.

Not only Jacob's name, but his character was changed ; he became an altered man ; a larger, more unselfish man ; " honest and true at last." It was not a development, but a revolution, not a modification or a change in the manifestation of his character, but a new creation. Indeed, a character may, even under the pressure of *development*, become totally different.

If actual violation in overt action is essentially impossible, as some psychologists hold, of what use are reformers and teachers of morals ; preachers and sermons ; churches and religious institutions ? Are they ornamental, or ordained that men may get a living or employ their time ? The philosophy of Christianity is that humanity may be cleansed from its impurity, redeemed from its selfishness, and made anew in the likeness of the perfect Christ.

Such radical changes in the human character are beyond our comprehension, but they are facts of history. These changes come more frequently through the feeling than through the reason ; through some new affection or attachment or the sudden renunciation of the former self ; or through the entering in of some new regnant idea which

creates a new centre of personal activity and ends in a permanent and complete readjustment of a man's whole life—his thoughts, his ways, his motives, his emotions, and his entire attitude to the past. We do not ask a felon to modify his character, or a libertine to modify his character, but to change it root and branch.

Joseph Cook spoke of the "fixity of character in this life." If he meant that man takes with him his thoughts, habits and works beyond the grave, we can understand ; but there is no fixity of character either with regard to stability or development. We may speak of fixity in the sense that there is a basis to character, but a radical change for better or for worse is always possible. Literature, both sacred and secular, is replete with instances of changes in the very springs of character by the relaxation of moral fibre through the influence of environment and circumstances. We distinguish between these two factors, for the one is inward, the other outward.

We may lay too much or too little stress on environment and circumstances. There is truth and error in the popular theory that ameliorated outward conditions are a panacea for the evils of society. It is useless to expect super-human honesty from a starving man, or super-human honesty from a youth brought up among thieves, or super-human virtue from a child bred in vice or damned before it is born. Shocks and great catastrophes can and do change character, not merely the manifestation but the character itself ; its root ideas, its tone, its sentiments and its habits. They may cause a man to plunge into infidelity, into licentiousness, into

irreverence ; or they may mellow, sanctify or redeem him. The same circumstances affect people in different ways. Loss of money or the want of money may make one character, while easy circumstances may make another.

The prison made Bunyan, and the gout did much for Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Character is made and unmade, formed and re-formed by failure, adversity, physical ailments, friends and enemies. This War has made, or consolidated, the British Empire. It has brought out the British character in an amazing way : it has even changed it. The basis of a strong character is in its possibilities of confronting antagonisms, which reveal the difference between the pinchbeck and the solid gold. Our unpreparedness, our initial misfortunes, and the hard discipline have done much for us. National character may change through the infusion of foreign blood, bad government, conquest, or through revolution, as in the case of France when it destroyed its old ideals and its past in order that it might build a new national edifice, a new society and a new character.

Two hundred years have been sufficient to give to the inhabitants of the United States a peculiar *ensemble* of qualities that distinguish the Yankee at once from other national types. They differ in physiognomy, manners, habits, morals, and in their way of looking at things. This peculiarity of the American character is largely the result of the peculiarity of their climate, and climate is a potent factor in the formation and modification of character. Some climates produce feminine traits of

individual and national character, others produce masculine types. People who live in warm or hot climates are more passionate and impulsive than those who live in colder climates, and they run through their course of life more rapidly.

These observations have been made as a prelude to our study of the character and temperament of Lord Rhondda, and as an indication of the principles which have guided us in our study of his development, life and work. There are many striking peculiarities of temperament, many diverse manifestations of genius and character, and many sharp edges which mark him off definitely from other public men of his own day and generation. One of the most intricate, as well as one of the most interesting, tasks which the psychologists of the future will have to face, is that of describing the various typical forms in which personality reveals itself ; the science is as yet in its infancy. That Viscount Rhondda was a very rare and a very singular type of personality will be generally conceded. It is, therefore, a question worth considering, what constituted his singularity ; what was the paramount significance of his genius and character ; what was the ground upon which the fame that came to him, so suddenly and unexpectedly, rests ; and whether he was in his total life and personality the kind of character that various persons and groups of persons supposed him to be.

CHAPTER IV

HIS CHARACTER AND TEMPERAMENT

THE days of gilded biographies and of uncandid autobiographies are over; what the age demands is fact, not myth; it is tired of fabulists who exaggerate everything connected with the life of a great man, especially if he has sprung from obscurity, who invent stories and magnify trivial and insignificant incidents in the life of their subject, in order to invest it with the glamour of romance. What the age expects a biographer to do is to analyze and interpret the personality of his subject, to show him in the setting of his age and in the horizon in which he lived; to indicate what part of his work or success was due to the moral and mental qualities which he inherited, to his education, to circumstances, to opportunities, to the events of his time, to his character or individuality.

As to autobiography, there is not in the whole realm of literature a more candid autobiographer than Luther; nowhere else do we find such self-revelation as we find in his letters and records of table talk. Neither Rousseau nor Pepys, nor any other great man, has told us as much about his own real character in its strength and weakness, merits and demerits, virtues and faults, as has Luther

about himself. There is no reservation and no dissimulation. He is almost coarsely frank ; and the remarkable thing is, that in this conscious and unconscious self-revelation, Luther stands forth revealed not only as a great, but as a good and a conscientious man, who brought the most wonderful things to pass by the sheer force of his own character and will, and by using the great opportunity which came in his way.

There are two sides—even antagonistic or apparently antagonistic sides—to every human existence, and it is no easy matter for an outsider or a biographer to give a true portrait of the real person, to lay bare his motives and impulses, to describe the origin and nature of the influences that played upon him, to trace all the causes that impelled him in this or that direction, or to account for the causes of his failure or success. Thus it is that the public estimate of a man's character is more often than not, the reverse of what he really is or was. Indeed, there is nothing in which the individual himself so often and so grievously fails as in the attempt to analyze his own motives and the springs of his own action ; there is none who has a full and a complete view of himself or of his own life.

Happy must be the man who can look back upon his life and say with truth that he has acted upon every occasion as he ought to have acted. But where can such a man be found ? If each man allowed his memory, or his moral sense, to speak without restraint, he would have to confess that he has not always acted according to his knowledge and experience ; or according to his own standard of

judgment, or of his duty to himself or to the community. It is one thing to have an ideal, it is another thing to live up to that ideal and to bring it to fruition.

If there is one characteristic more notable than another, which may be attributed to Viscount Rhondda, it is candour and his admiration of candour in others. He has told us of his own political ambitions and disappointments, of the things he desired and failed to do, not because he had not the energy or the ability to get them done, but partly because during the greater part of his life he did not find, or was not given, the position that squared with his own genius. Great as had been his achievements as a business man and an organizer of industry, it was in the last phase of his career that his true greatness was revealed, when he was called to the councils of State to help in the reorganization of national affairs more suitable to war-time conditions. His record of work and success at the Food Ministry has earned for him a fame which any man or minister of state might regard with envy.

It is a remarkable fact that while Viscount Rhondda never aspired to popularity in the common acceptation of the term, and never laboured for it, yet he died the most popular man in England.

Count Mazzuchelli, an eminent *littérateur* of the eighteenth century, in his preface to the second edition of the life of Pietro Aretino, says: "The name of Pietro Aretino has always been so famous in the world that it never could be hid from the knowledge of even the least learned." So it may be

said to-day of Viscount Rhondda ; his name is so famous that it could not be hid from the knowledge of even the least-learned, not only in Great Britain, but in the Colonies and the United States of America.

True, fame had not always been fair to him. Commerce knew him well for many years before the war, but he was not widely known to the general public, or to the world at large, two and a half years ago. For more than a generation fame stood with eyes bound, sometimes hesitating and doubting, sometimes taking in blind confidence the opinions and prejudices of his critics and of the opponents of the capitalistic system, as a true estimate of his life and character. But the ebb and flow of the tide of injustice has at last been reversed ; and it was time he should be regarded as he was on his merits, a man though not of noble lineage yet of noble soul ; a man of the knightly order, chivalrous, courteous and sagacious ; a man imbued with the spirit of honesty and integrity, industry and virility ; possessing insight into the character of men and extraordinary will power.

His personal appearance, which was not without a certain imperial fascination, harmonized with his character and with the opinion generally entertained of him by those who knew him best. He was tall, slightly grey, with dark blue eyes, which had a gleam of cheerfulness in them. He had the lined face of a man who possessed the combining qualities which made him an independent unity of power and a director of public affairs ; it denoted quickness of perception which was only equalled by the caution and concentration of purpose which enabled

him to perfect and mature his plans, and the results of his calculations and observations.

If a stranger saw Viscount Rhondda among a thousand he would at once come to the conclusion that he was no ordinary man, and that he felt the weight of some great responsibility. He walked with a firm and a heavy step, his face looking downward as if in deep contemplation. He was not much concerned about his outward appearance, his clothes seemed to hang loosely about him, and his black tie was tied in a bow of the old-fashioned sort which gave him rather a quaint appearance. There was an aspect of sadness about him, especially when viewed from a distance, yet he was social and companionable, and companionable through his emotions quite as much as through his intelligence. His spirit was very youthful and he had a strong sense of humour. He was such a familiar figure that everybody, even the children, knew him, and everybody wanted to know him. He was not only respected but beloved, and more for the wealth of his manhood than for his worldly wealth. Money is a power, it commands learning and authority. Money power ranks next to intellectual power, and very often it is made a substitute for it. But Viscount Rhondda was not a powerful man merely because of his wealth; he was respected and loved in spite of his riches; the charm was in his manhood, which added to the charm of his riches.

He was honoured and beloved for his native simplicity, urbanity, and accessibility; for his kindliness, humaneness, and friendliness. He had the good breeding which comes from the heart,

and the things which reveal man as acting and reacting in society are in the heart. Though his knowledge of the mining industry and of the secret workings of the coal trade was greater than that of any other man of his time—with the exception perhaps of Sir William Thomas Lewis (afterwards known as Lord Merthyr), who was his contemporary, and who was a prominent figure in the South Wales coalfields—he never displayed his knowledge or his authority arbitrarily before his workmen, or in social and private life.

The foppery so characteristic of some men of his means and status in life, was not only foreign but offensive to his nature. He presided at an Eisteddfod held at Llwynypia about 1882, and his simplicity greatly impressed those who were present. The person who proposed a vote of thanks to him for presiding said he liked Mr. D. A. Thomas because he was “not a bit of a gentleman.” He sought to hide rather than to assert the good that was in him ; what measure of respect or honour was accorded him he fully deserved. He made no effort to show himself to the best advantage, or to force himself upon the public ; and whenever his influence could be used on behalf of others, it was never used for the purpose of doing a mean thing for a friend or against an enemy. His principle of action was essentially right, though like every other mortal man he did not always succeed in executing it, and he had his weak as well as his strong points.

This is not to imply that Viscount Rhondda was, properly speaking, a modest or a humble man. There is a humility that is self-degrading. He knew, as

all men of affairs know, that modesty and humility, which are among the marks of a great mind, are at best but starving qualities. The man who is made leader of public opinion, the successful man from a worldly or self-interested point of view, is the self-assertive man who compels a wayward and superficial public to take him at his own estimate, and who has the gift of conveying the impression that he knows more than he does. A modest, retiring disposition, weakens a man's power; it sets him in a worse light than he deserves, and places him at a disadvantage in the battle for bread and place and power.

A brazen man, though inferior in knowledge, education and culture, stands a far better chance than a modest, unostentatious man of superior mentality, erudition and accomplishments. Truly, the race in these bustling days is not to the humble, but to the man of assertion. It is the pugnacious qualities that count. Modesty, humility, delicateness, sensitiveness, are the very things that are now crushed in the struggle for existence. Though a man may be able to speak twenty languages, and his knowledge may be so profound as to constitute him a reference library, yet if he lacks boldness and self-assertiveness, he will not be allowed to walk in front of the procession. It is a very grotesque spectacle, yet a fact, that society, especially political society, is standing on its head; brains are at the feet.

It was partly for these reasons that Viscount Rhondda despised politics, or at any rate its conditions. He had a transcendent aversion to sham, cant, unveracity and intrigue; but however dis-

appointed, he never intrigued or tried to undermine or depose others. His whole conduct was stamped by the most unshaken probity. He hated meanness. True, he had his oddities and protruding idiosyncrasies ; while strong in some aspects of his character, he was weak and defective in others. But he was candid and upright.

He was the architect of his own fame, and it would be true to say that he was an independent source of power and influence. Some public men of the past seem to have idly drifted with those events and circumstances that compose currents or movements, others seem to have endeavoured to guide them in certain directions, so that the superficial observer might think that they originated or controlled them, whereas they only appeared at the psychological moment ; that is, at the moment when the ideas, labour and sacrifice of the men of the past were combining and crystallizing. Viscount Rhondda not only caused certain currents to flow with greater rapidity, but he created currents. He had the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding mind, of the men of history who have originated movements and combinations, and manipulated forces for a certain definite end. He was no mere straw in the rushing tide of life, or a blind imitator, but a vivid and an illuminating personality who made history.

Personality is a great, some would say the chief, factor in the life of our own day and of the past. Viscount Rhondda was a many-sided personality—a commercial magnate, financier, politician, administrator and statesman, who stood out from the mass

of men, and from men of his own rank in life. To understand him we must look at him as he was in his strength and weakness. He had his ambition, but he also had his ideals, and it is by his own, not by our, ideals, or the ideals he rejected that we are to judge him. The selection of a man's ideals depends upon the operation of interest and desire, and these in turn depend, partly upon the disposition of the tendencies which he has inherited, partly upon the forces of his social and physical environment. It would therefore be an injustice to judge him except in the light of his own ideals.

There are three ways of studying every personality. One is to look for all the characteristics worthy of censure, and to criticize or denounce them in gross. The second is to look for characteristics deserving of praise, and to magnify them in gross, minimizing or overlooking every weakness or defect. The third is to look at the high lights and the shadows, the strong and the weak points, and strike a mean between the two extremes. This was Viscount Rhondda's standard of moral judgment of men and movements. He had his own measures of right and wrong, but he acted on the maxim that an absolute moral judgment has no place in history, and he did not consider the surrender of a fixed principle a necessary preparation for a sympathetic observation of men, living or dead. He never had recourse to sentimental arguments; he judged coolly, often coldly, and measured every man by his intrinsic worth, and every idea or proposition by its practical utility. This was the natural bent of his mind.

The War has shattered many ideals, removed

many landmarks and touched many foundations. It has caused us to revise our economic theories, our social and ethical maxims. It has also taught us not to judge a man's worth by his attitude towards this or that faction in politics or religion, but by his capabilities, his achievements and his patriotism ; by his fitness for the position which he holds and his loyalty to his trust. Men's moral judgments are too often swayed by personal prejudices and partisan feeling. Such a bias in forming moral judgment on men and movements has been more or less common to every age, race and country. The working of this natural tendency was very pronounced in England and Wales in pre-war days ; it was intensified in the struggle between opposing ideals—political, economic and religious. It may be, probably is, lurking in the background, waiting for its opportunity, when party politics will once more divide and distract the community, and when politicians and sectional leaders will bewilder the people by their shibboleths.

However, it is a distinct gain that, generally speaking, the true portraits of our statesmen and publicists are being made during this War out of the positive records of their acts, capacity and achievements. This, in part, is the secret of the revulsion of feeling in the country respecting two of the three great Welshmen who have won fame during this War ; namely, the Prime Minister, and Viscount Rhondda who was a personality out of the common. To his personality we must ascribe his success quite as much as to his opportunity, for the greater a man's opportunity the more tragic his

failure if he does not prove equal to it. After practically a lifetime of disappointments, Viscount Rhondda at last found his opportunity and proved equal to it. This is the secret of the problem which he presents.

Never was fame established on a more solid foundation. The passion for fame or glory which possesses some public men like an infectious disease, is not the desire to be known and recognized for doing things that are worth doing and doing them well, but a desire to be applauded by one's fellows for anything and everything ; a thirst for vulgar flattery, as if it were a thing to be eaten and drunk. Viscount Rhondda never had any craving for fame or glory of this spurious kind ; he was not liberal or generous-minded enough to pay for it, and was too independent to intrigue for it. He was eminently clever and adroit, but not clever or adroit enough to coin a fictitious reputation for himself. The petty, the superficial and the unreal never appealed to him ; he had none of that pride which is fed by a morbid craving for hollow praise which gives a sense of distinction in the eyes of all sorts and conditions of men.

True, he was ambitious, like most men of ability and energy in commerce, politics and religion. Ambition is a noble thing to have, though something depends upon the character of one's ambition. Jonathan Edwards had the ambition to be the best man that ever lived ; Saint Augustine for truth and purity of life. Viscount Rhondda had the ambition for power, dignity and authority. He had the ambition to be a Commoner and a millionaire, but

a "millionaire noble," as Sir William Howard Russell once said when he was asked what he would most like to be. In other men such an ambition might mean something ignoble, but in Viscount Rhondda it signified the noblest of ambitions. He could afford to confess his thoughts and aspirations, for he was in no danger of confounding means and ends. He was not an idolator of power as such, it was rather that he was intensely interested in public affairs ; he coveted power and position for himself because it would mean a vantage-ground for the exercise of influence in the world. When after many years of toil, anxiety and disappointment, he climbed to the eminence where authority is conceded as a right, he proved that he was worthy of it, and he used it for the good of the nation at large. "I love power and I want power," he once said.

But he did not love power for its own sake, he did not make a god of it as did Napoleon, neither did he use it for selfish purposes. His ambition for power was an ambition for service ; and he subordinated everything to this end. Power he acquired, and the greater his power the greater his service. This was the essence of his strength and the secret of his fame. The very height of his ambition was reached when he was made Food Controller, with the helm in his own hand. It was the chief quest of his life to be in the most prominent position, for the highest end, and for the welfare of the people as a whole.

Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, his peril was in his love of power and publicity of this higher kind. It made him jealous of others—such was the pecu-

liarity of his temperament. This jealousy and suspicion towards the actions and purposes of others was an idiosyncrasy of his own mental and moral organization, and it had a racially hereditary source. The spirit of rivalry was strong in him, and he always had a fear of being relegated to an inferior or a secondary position. But it was jealousy without malignity or envy.

There are many men of history who were vulnerable where they were strong. For instance, John Wesley was considered a very successful administrator; the discipline of his ecclesiastical charge was almost perfect. He would advise, admonish, even suspend his local preachers if and when he deemed it necessary; when such discipline proved inadequate, he would expel them. He always insisted upon obedience within his own religious community. Yet, it is on record that he failed to rule his own family; he bore on the body the marks of his wife's violence. After twenty years of married life she left him. To one of his Irish preachers he said, "Avoid all familiarity with women," though he himself was in his lifetime in many perils from women, partly on account of his own ardent and emotional temperament. A man who is inherently truthful, whose credit for veracity is so high that his word is his bond and final on the matters of the greatest importance, is suddenly confronted with a question affecting the honour or truthfulness of an acquaintance; a question that demands a direct and an immediate answer. Being taken unawares and in an unguarded frame of mind, he gives an answer which, on reflection, proves to be the wrong one.

He has compromised the truth and has done an acquaintance an injustice. He does not explain, for that, he thinks, would make matters worse. Thus a truthful man has unwittingly told an untruth, as an untruthful man may, and sometimes does, tell the truth.

This jealousy of others, which was a weak point in Viscount Rhondda's character, and which was a product of his ambition, made it difficult, sometimes more than difficult, for him to run in harness and to co-operate with others. His individuality was too strong and vehement to allow him to occupy a secondary position; he wanted to command. Not that he was arbitrary or tyrannical, or that he discouraged independence of mind in those with whom he associated. There arise personalities who have extraordinary volitional and intellectual potency, who exercise an arbitrary or one-sided authority over others, who ignore or thrust aside those who differ from them or who do not play the part of blind adherents or sycophants, who ostracize every man of independent spirit. Viscount Rhondda was not a personality of this type. If there was any character he despised it was that of the sycophant and blind imitator. Being a man of independent spirit himself, he admired independence of thought and action in others.

But if Viscount Rhondda wanted to be master, it should in justice be said that he was born or made to be master. When at last he was given a position that suited his genius and ambition, a position which invested him with almost unlimited power, he accomplished the greatest and noblest work of his

life. It was then that he came to his throne, and stood out revealed to the world as one of the great men of his age.

It was alleged by many critics and opponents, and not without some show of reason, that Viscount Rhondda was selfish, and wholly absorbed in the process of amassing wealth for himself and family, and for his shareholders. In fact, they avowed their belief that so much wealth ought not to be in the hands of one man, or one company or combination of companies, and that it could not have been accumulated by fair and just means. But there is ample evidence that he was one of the fairest and most just of employers, and this has been admitted by some Socialists who were among his bitterest opponents.

He had the transcendent talent that takes trouble, the only way by which any man can realize the most genuine meaning of his own life as well as of life in general, when looked at in its noblest aspect. He had the disposition as well as the genius for hard work, and it was that which is difficult rather than that which is easy that attracted and inspired him to develop his native capacity to the utmost limit. Idleness he hated; he had neither the talent nor the taste which makes a man contented in retirement. Out of his hatred of idleness there came a versatility worthy of note, even in an age of versatile men.

Viscount Rhondda was not regarded by the public at large as a philanthropist; he did not regard himself in that light. "It is '*quid pro quo*' with me," he once said to the writer. True, he did not keep himself in touch with poverty and wretchedness in

order to relieve it ; he lived and moved in a different horizon, though he had the sympathetic instinct ; the sense of humanity was strong in him.

A great French writer said that no man could understand and really pity the sufferings of the hungry and unfortunate classes unless he himself had known what it was to undergo the same experience. He meant that in the human mind there must be acute memory of physical suffering and destitution to make sympathy with such want and suffering possible and genuine. It is a historical fact that there is much more charity in proportion among the very poor than among the very rich. Thousands in our great centres of population would be far worse off than they are were it not for the unfailing kindness of the very poor to each other.

But it would not be correct to say that only the man who has himself known sorrow and distress and want, can sympathize with those who are in a similar condition. Ruskin's best thoughts and deepest sympathies were with the poor. The same may be said of Gladstone, Lord Shaftesbury, and other great historical figures. Viscount Rhondda was a rich man, and had never known want. His parents were prosperous, and in a position to give him a university education ; but when at the Local Government Board he laid the basis of a Ministry of Health. It was his philanthropic instincts that caused him to devote his thought and energy to the vital question of child welfare, in which he saw an opportunity of reducing infant mortality to a minimum, and, thereby, of saving many thousands of lives for the State every year.

Viscount Rhondda was not illiberal, though liberality has never been accounted to him for righteousness by the public, partly for the reason that when he gave it was without ostentation, and from the fulness of his heart rather than from principle. It is here that we see the difference between the man who is merely moral and the man who is religious as well as moral. He was happy in bestowing small nameless deeds of kindness. There are men of wealth who will ostentatiously subscribe to some charitable institution, but who hesitate to help a friend in adversity, and who refuse to give a helping hand quietly to a worthy man. They are thinking of how a benefaction will affect *them*, but the higher the motive the less self is considered. The genuinely good man never bestows a gift because the fact will be made known ; secrecy is one of the conditions he often imposes.

Viscount Rhondda was naturally a man of good spirit, of quick and responsive sympathies. He was kind by instinct rather than by effort, and those who knew him best were impressed by the grace with which he sometimes identified himself with the difficulties of others. Not only had he imbibed the first lesson that religion teaches a man, that is, to do good ; but he did good in the only way that it should be done, namely, with due regard to the feelings of the recipient. Wealth he had gathered, but his wealth had not turned his head, nor robbed him of his manhood ; neither did he damn his soul in the process of amassing wealth. He acted on the principle that the power which wealth or social position brought to its possessor, was a blessing only when used in the service of the community.

As an illustration of the human side of his character, we quote the following incident related by Captain Griffiths of Cardiff, the Seamen's leader, during one of the coal strikes. "Captain Griffiths helped to form the ward committees which dealt with poverty in their own area. The scheme, it will be remembered, was financed by public charity. On a Sunday morning Captain Griffiths telephoned to Lord Rhondda at Llanwern and told him he wanted to see him at once. 'Can't you let me have a day of rest?' said Lord Rhondda. 'No,' replied Captain Griffiths; 'people are starving.' Lord Rhondda arranged an immediate appointment. Captain Griffiths told him the story of the distress which the strike had caused, pointing to the desolate scenes in the homes of some of the workers, the furniture of which had been pledged until in some cases a table and a chair only remained. Captain Griffiths suddenly discovered that Lord Rhondda was deeply moved; after a few minutes, he walked across to Captain Griffiths, tapped him on the shoulder, and said, 'It is a pity there are not more men like you in Cardiff.' Forthwith Lord Rhondda wrote out a cheque for £100."

"I make no other charitable gifts," he says in his will, "because I have devoted the greater part of my life to public affairs, and I have already given large sums of money for charitable and public causes."

There is not a place of worship, no social or educational institution, in the borough of Merthyr and Aberdare that Viscount Rhondda, when he was plain "D.A.," did not befriend. No other man in his day, or before his day, proved such a generous sup-

porter of religion in all its forms in that district, yet he was modest and unostentatious, and never interfered with the wishes or the liberties of those whom he befriended. It distressed him to see that Nonconformist ministers were so inadequately paid, even by large and prosperous congregations, and how their outgoings absorbed their incomes. There are many unrecorded deeds of genuine kindness that stand to his credit in the religious annals of the borough of Merthyr and Aberdare, and in the annals of the Congregational pulpit in Wales.

It is open to the cynic to say that being the senior Member for the Borough and anxious to retain his seat in Parliament, he was actuated by prudential considerations; there is, no doubt, a degree of truth in this. Being a man of wealth and a Parliamentary representative of the people, much was expected of him by his constituents, and they were not disappointed. What is true, in this respect, of rich Parliamentary Representatives, is also true of Viscount Rhondda. But it is also true that he bestowed charity without any hope of reward.

As to his religious proclivities, he was, nominally, a Congregationalist, though, as he himself modestly said, not a very good specimen. But this is delicate ground. His cousin, the Rev. Arnold Thomas of Bristol, said at his graveside that he was a religious man to the core. Mr. Thomas is a witness of weight, and his opinion cannot and should not be disregarded, though it is contrary to the opinion held by very many who were friendly to Viscount Rhondda, and who were associated with him for many years in social and business life.

It would be more correct to say that the religious side of Viscount Rhondda's character did not assert itself than to say that he was not religious. He certainly bore in his spirit and speech and demeanour and action, whether consciously or unconsciously, the marks of religious culture and influence, though he was not given to the ostentatious use of pious phraseology, and he never despised those who had a different disposition, or whose religious ideas had been cast in a different mould.

Although his Cymric instincts were strong, the element of gloom in religion never appealed to him. We might go further and say that religion in its organized form, or as it expresses itself in the common experience of the Welsh people, was not the deepest part of his life, or the most serious and practical factor in life, to him. At no time did he show any superstitious regard for nobility, whether ecclesiastical or social. In theological controversies, which seldom if ever lead to any tangible results, he took but little interest ; he had, apparently, no doctrinal prepossessions, his tastes ran in a different direction ; and being a purely business man his mind was devoted to more practical things. The obscurantism which is clothed in the garb of zeal for religion could not possibly appeal to a man of his type. He believed in the right of free thought and inquiry in the realm of religion as he did in the realm of politics, for he regarded it as the essence of true progress and learning, and the condition of high civilization.

The keynote of his own character was frankness, open-mindedness and sincerity, the qualities that

he admired in others. No one entertained greater respect for sincerity in a minister of religion than did Viscount Rhondda. Father Tyrrel once said that the clergy and ministers of religion are suspected of saying what they do not mean, not exactly with a conscious mendacity, but with a subconscious equivocation; that is, the need and desire for saying the "orthodox" thing that leads to a certain form of inward insincerity, or lack of open-mindedness; that is, ministers and clergy force themselves to think what they ought to say.

If Viscount Rhondda himself had not been gifted with the art of persuasion, or the gift of oratory, he admired the eloquent preachers of Wales; but it was the note of sincerity and independence of thought in a preacher that arrested his attention; and though he was not strict in religious observances, he was a man of puritanical seriousness and great moral earnestness, who, however engrossed in mundane things, never forgot moral ideals.

Viscount Rhondda had the genius for friendship; he possessed not only the attributes of a good man, but of a good friend. A man may have the gift of benevolence without having the gift of friendship. In true friendship there is the element of personal concern. Friendship ranks among the greatest of human affections. Strictly speaking, friendship is not a virtue or a mode of conduct, though in the realm of conduct it stands very high. Aristotle says that it is a "kind of virtue," but more of an emotion or of a feeling than of a virtue, though emotion or feeling is a determinant of conduct. In essence it is of the heart rather than of the intellect, and it is

retained and nourished by the heart irrespective of any natural endowment, or education, or any law or quality, or habit of the soul. There can be friendship where there is no admiration ; and admiration where there is no friendship.

Lord Rhondda was a virtuous friend, for his friendship was based on the virtue of sympathy, and it was an exercise in that virtue. It was formed for usefulness as well as for companionship ; it was helpful to his friends and to himself. It was not a random impulse ; he did not make friends in haste, but when he did, he gave new hope and new animation to the objects of his care. Friendship in him assumed its noblest and most enduring form ; though the discriminating element was never absent, his friendship was not wholly based on equality of position, or intelligence, or opinion. The one thing that is essential to true friendship is sympathy, and with sympathy sincerity ; these requisites Viscount Rhondda possessed.

He had the same settled regard for his friends as he had for himself, and what he willed for them he willed disinterestedly and for their good. The unselfish characteristic which marks the highest and most perfect friendship was a characteristic of his friendship ; it was the type of friendship which contributes to happiness, and which is a factor in the formation of good character. This does not mean that he cared *more* for his friends than for himself, or cared for them *as* he cared for himself ; literally speaking, this is impossible in action. Each man's nature and circumstances require that he should primarily care for his own concerns ; it is a condition

precedent to caring for others. But partial surrender of self for the sake of friends and for the good of others, is one of the fundamental characteristics of a good character, and one of the chief means by which good character is developed.

Viscount Rhondda was a Welshman by birth, instinct, sympathies and disposition ; he was over-sensitive, and, like his father, quick to take offence. His character in this respect took a colouring from the character of his race ; he was a man peculiarly Welsh when judged in the light of this national trait. He loved the great men of Wales—her saints, religious leaders, poets, patriots, hymnologists and heroes. He was the donor of the series of Welsh national statuary which adorns the marble hall of the Cardiff City Hall.

As to his Cymric instincts, it might be observed that instinct is relatively flexible and plastic. Intelligence, observation, contact with other minds, and a larger experience of the world, come in to exercise modifications in those racial instincts, racial thoughts and habits and tendencies, which have been transmitted by heredity to the individual. This was a marked feature in the development of Lord Rhondda's personality. He was a man who had travelled extensively, who had been taught by his cosmopolitan experience to look at life in all its aspects and bearings, with the result that his intelligence transformed his native reactions in accordance with the dictates of his personal experience. If we desire to discover his own contribution to his own success and prosperity and achievements, we find it in his reason and judgment, and in the terms of his own individual experience.

This, in part, explains the fact that though an ardent Welshman, he had none of that fierce and excessive enthusiasm which is so romantic and distinguishing a feature of the Welsh national character. He was not so exclusively a Welshman that he would be unfit to govern a colony or a country totally different in language, habits, sentiments and social characteristics from his native land. He recognized that he, as a Welshman, had something to learn from men of other nationalities, and that his own nation had something to learn from other nations. Family or racial conditions were not allowed to obscure his view of the world as it is. He took a wide range over all things that are of common interest to mankind. He believed that a man who aspired to leadership, or who claimed to be a director of public affairs, ought to look at life with his own eyes, not with the eyes of the dead. He spoke the Welsh language, that is, where necessary, but English was his habitual speech. He was not in bondage to the language, or to Welsh national ideals, though an ardent advocate of the claims of Wales to a larger recognition on the part of the State. He was one of the few Welshmen who have succeeded in freeing themselves from local or traditional methods of feeling and thinking, yet without losing their Cymric sympathies. He was a Briton first and a Welshman afterwards. He was not only a great Welshman, but a great national character whose fame has spread far and wide, and whose memory, we hope, will remain ever green.

It is, however, a sad reflection that the general public soon becomes oblivious of the personality and

work and achievements of statesmen and publicists who were great and famous in their day, who impressed their generation by the worth of their personal character, their practical and legislative acts, and by the greatness and completeness of their services. The reader will call to mind the names of distinguished men who, after enjoying great popularity, even fame, in their own day and even in generations immediately succeeding, have fallen into undeserved oblivion. Sixty years or so ago Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the first Welshman to become Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was wont to excite the Olympic wrath of Gladstone over matters of finance, filled a large place in Palmerston's administration. He was considered one of the most skilful statesmen and one of the most learned men of his day. No statesman commanded greater authority in the House of Commons. He it was who passed the Act—June 15, 1855—which abolished the special stamp duty imposed on newspapers. Yet, Cornewall Lewis has fallen into complete oblivion. His name is unknown to the public at large, and scarcely ever mentioned among politicians who, as Disraeli said, might with advantage take him as an example. For this reason we included a character sketch of him by the Right Hon. George W. E. Russell in our work entitled "Welsh Political and Educational Leaders in the Victorian Era."

There are some who have had the good fortune to be rescued from oblivion, such, for instance, as Hans Sachs (1494-1576), who enjoyed great fame in his day, and who wrote over five thousand poems which were distinguished for their wit, their descrip-

tive power, and their human feeling. It was Goethe who rendered the memory of Hans Sachs and German literature this service.

The character, work and achievements, of good and great men are too precious a possession of history to be allowed to be lightly abandoned, or to drift into obscurity. That Viscount Rhondda was a good and a great man is *now* unquestioned and unquestionable. We say now, advisedly, for the reason that, as we have already implied, fame had not always been fair to him; his path had not always been strewn with such compliments and tokens of admiration as he received just before and after his death. In pre-war days he was labelled with a larger amount of strong epithets than any employer or business man in South Wales, with the exception, perhaps, of Lord Merthyr, once known as Sir William Thomas Lewis. Viscount Rhondda was made the scapegoat for all the "sins" of the mineowners, and for all the evils that were alleged to be due to the capitalistic system. What he and the rest of the coalowners desired, it was alleged, was to employ workmen who were not educated into thinking for themselves, who would labour mechanically and uncomplainingly from morning until night for a mere pittance, and who would eventually remain content with the lot in which they were born. At one time the colliers would hail him as their champion and benefactor; at another, they would denounce him as their foe and oppressor. Mabon, the well-known miners' leader, went through a similar experience more than once; should he decide, as he did decide on several occasions, that

the miners were wrong and the masters right, it was at his peril and the risk of personal safety.

In the great strike of 1898, Viscount Rhondda kept the Clydach Vale collieries, of which he was a director, open. It was alleged that he had broken faith with the other coalowners, but he claimed liberty of action in view of the fact that the Clydach Vale collieries were outside the Coalowners' Association. Not only did he keep his collieries open, he paid the most generous wages, with the result that he enhanced his personal reputation among the miners by this separate and independent action, and, it need hardly be said, he benefited financially. In 1910-12, there was another serious disturbance in the South Wales coalfields. On that occasion Viscount Rhondda stood by the Association for a proper observance of contracts. The miners alleged that the breach of contract was on the part of the Coalowners' Association and of Viscount Rhondda himself, with the result that he was made an object of criticism and mistrust and ridicule. This was the changing horizon in which he lived during the greater part of his business career.

On the whole he did not seem to trouble much concerning what his critics and traducers said about him. He affected towards them a lofty contempt which was both clever and effective, if not always real. He himself claimed to have the skin of a rhinoceros; but the truth is, that he was highly sensitive to both praise and blame. Secretiveness, or taciturnity, as it is commonly, or paradoxically, expressed, was one of his temperamental characteristics; he could seal his lips, conceal his plans and

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projects, behind a screen of non-committal silence and reserve. He could suppress his emotions and hide his feelings when in society, however bitter his disappointment. But it is not natural for any man, however well disciplined and hardened by circumstances, not to crave for sympathy and admiration, or not to be sensitive to his environment ; it is an expression of the very essence of humanity, and Viscount Rhondda was no exception.

When, however, questions of wages, figures, dividends, management and administration, were in dispute, he never hesitated to take up the challenge, and those who assailed his administration found his name "a diamond which broke the teeth of those who tried to bite it," for he was always truthful, accurate and convincing, and he had a complete mastery of the facts. It was this truthfulness, this scientific accuracy, that gave him such a signal superiority over his critics and adversaries, and that disconcerted them. The man who counts is he who has this characteristic, namely, a persistent desire to ascertain facts, who must know all the facts on all sides before he can proceed to give judgment. This was one of the characteristics of Viscount Rhondda. He could not be moved easily either to believe, act, or advise, but once his mind was made up he was practically invincible, for his will was inflexible, and he had the power to make his convictions felt and his decisions effective.

He was always sure of his facts, and there was no ambiguity, whether accidental or intentional. He never took refuge in clouds of words in order to conceal his meaning or the absence of any meaning.

He never mystified those whom he addressed by pen. His diction was classic, his literary tastes were discriminating, and he was an adept in the use of the weapon of satire ; his mind was logical, and he wielded a facile pen. We are of the opinion that if he had challenged fame in the strictest domain of literature, or to the expression of thought in words, he might have become one of the foremost men of letters of his day.

In spite of the fact that Lord Rhondda presented, as a business man and a Capitalist, a wide field for criticism, and that he had some bitter foes who sought to circumvent him and to cause trouble in his collieries, he had sincere and powerful supporters, and those who believed in his honesty and integrity—none doubted his great administrative abilities—were in dignity and numbers fifty to one compared to those who mistrusted and maligned him. He was the most feared and the most respected and beloved by the great mass of miners. Feared because of the enormous power which he wielded, and his unconquerable determination. They knew that once he had decided upon his course of action no threats or strikes would avail, that he would adhere inflexibly to the decision at which he had arrived. This was his instinct rather than an opinion.

He was strong in what we call the primary qualities, and weak in what are termed the secondary qualities ; that is, the qualities that are corruptions of the primary ones. Among the primary qualities may be mentioned reverence, justice, love of truth, sympathy and integrity. Among the secondary

qualities malice and meanness. These are corruptions of the passion virtues. He had the moral excellence of independence, and the moral courage to declare the conclusions at which he had independently arrived; this is one of the hall-marks of sincerity.

We emphasize these points chiefly for the reason that the controversy was almost invariably over his character, not his moral character, for that was never questioned; the correctness of his private life added to the dignity of his public career. The controversy was over his character as a Capitalist and industrial magnate, and his relation to the miners. His capacity for business was never questioned, even by those who were unfriendly to him. Critics and foes seldom if ever dispute over what is obvious to the public in this respect; they could not if they wished in the case of Viscount Rhondda. His organizing and administrative abilities were as patent as were his urbanity and accessibility. But it was alleged that it was his own personal interests and those of his shareholders that were the paramount consideration in his estimation. His selfishness, it was said, was apparent in every business act or enterprise with which he was connected.

The view that we take, and it was the view that he himself took, is that he was a much misunderstood man, both as regards his motives and his actions. It was due partly to the fact that there was a growing antagonism between his economic views and the economic views of the extremists in the South Wales coalfields; partly because the attitude he assumed and the course of action he adopted on

certain occasions seemed hard and imperious ; partly because he would have his own way and impose his will on others ; partly because of the impression that his conception of himself as a moral person, and as an employer of labour with duties and obligations, was narrow and unenlightened.

That Viscount Rhondda was imperious, there can be no doubt ; whether in great or small things he liked to decide questions for himself, and to act upon that decision. When his judgment was founded on what appeared to him to be facts, or on the merits of a course of action which appeared to him to be best or most profitable for the interests which he represented, he no more mistrusted that judgment than he did the evidence of his own senses, though his judgment of men and of movements was sometimes faulty ; and if he valued tact he did not always exercise it. He saw a thing as it presented itself to him, and that view he sought to enforce upon others. He was an uncompromising man, and his temperament was of the cold and calculating type. He spoke his own mind plainly and expressed his own views clearly and emphatically, and he expected others to speak their own mind and express their own views with equal clearness and emphasis ; yet he seemed, on occasions at any rate, rather surprised if they did not end by agreeing with him.

But the true foundation of the enormous business which he established and controlled was in his own character, and it would be true to say that it was not built on the ruins of the fortunes of other men ; he was strong and large enough to build a fortune for himself without pulling down others, and strong

and large enough to build his own name without deposing others. He was jealous of rivals; he wanted to stand on his own pedestal, and to be viewed as he stood alone in his own light; but he never sought to crush a rival. Such was the complexity of his own personality that it was difficult for those who did not know him well to understand him, or to believe in his consistency. He gave the impression of being relatively changeable, as if there were several men in the skin of one, antagonistic and irreconcilable. It is in this character of a variant from the norm that we find the secret of the seeming irregularity of his mind, and of the conflicting views which were held of his character and temperament during his business and political career.

We do not say that he was a man upon whose like we shall never look again. The average man has in him something of the various elements presented by Viscount Rhondda, but the difference between him and the average man was that these elements exercised a far greater sway over him, and were conjoined with stronger and more imperious capacities, so that he stood out boldly from his own environment, and from the mass of men. His conception of himself as a moral man with duties and obligations was broader and more enlightened than was commonly supposed in pre-war days, and in spite of all the suspicion that attached to him as an employer of labour, we believe—and there is ample corroborative evidence in favour of this belief—that he was a just man, that he had the highest interest of the miners and of the community at heart, and that, notwithstanding his economic outlook, he had

an appreciation of the real ethical, as well as of the business, side of his commercial enterprises. He was among the most humanitarily minded of men as well as one of the ablest and most useful of statesmen, who died full of honours, and who is to be remembered as one of those who left the world—his own world—better than he found it.

CHAPTER V

HIS BUSINESS LIFE

A SEPARATE chapter might be written on the changes—economic, social, literary, educational, political and religious—that have taken place since the opening of the Welsh coalfields and iron-works, in the first half of the nineteenth century. It would not be too much to say that the discovery of the mineral wealth of the southern part of the country is the most important event that has taken place in the history of the Principality since the days of the Annexation. It may be described as the discovery of a New World, and its effect upon the mental characteristics of the people of Wales, their literature, their system of education, their ambitions, their mode of living, and their knowledge, has been incalculable. So much, however, has been said concerning its effect upon the development of the shipping industry and the railway system, upon agriculture which had for centuries been the primary basis of production, and upon the capitalization of commerce, that its effects in the directions indicated have been almost entirely overlooked.

In the generation preceding the discovery of this mineral wealth, education was looked upon in Wales as the means whereby the sons of the gentry might

be prepared for the great public schools and the Universities of England, in order to equip them for positions of responsibility in life. A great deal of money was left for the purpose of providing the sons of Wales with some such education ; the aim being to produce, what was termed, " classical scholars." A prosperous farmer would send his son to one of the Grammar Schools for a quarter, or it may be for a year ; but, generally speaking, the advantages gained were of no practical value to him. It was not an uncommon thing to find some of those who had attended these schools making a show of their " learning," and trying to edify their friends by repeating, "*Propria quæ maribus dicuntur mascula dicas*"; or, "*As in presenti perfectum format in avi*," without understanding the meaning of a single word of what they were repeating, any more than if they were repeating Sanskrit.

Education in its relation to industry, to the various crafts, and to the needs of everyday life, was not thought of, or considered necessary. It was with the rise of industrial Wales that the necessity for educating the sons of Wales on these lines dawned upon the people. True, a noble and self-denying effort was made by Thomas Gouge in the latter end of the seventeenth, and by Griffiths Jones, of Llanddowror, in the first part of the eighteenth century, to provide a democratic system of education, but the Wales of their day was not the Wales of the " eighties " and " nineties." There was very little money in circulation, and, therefore, very few educational advantages. Before the rise of industrialism in the early part of the eighteenth

century, commerce, like politics, was at a very low ebb in Wales, and there was but very little aptitude for it. With respect to the produce that went out of the country, it was a common thing for Englishmen to send their representatives down to Wales to buy, or to appoint agents in Wales to do the buying for them. It is hardly necessary to say that the English merchant took every advantage of the want of commercial knowledge on the part of the Welshman.

But the development of industry in Wales taught the natives how to buy and sell ; it taught them that the circulation of money was an element of civilization, and that it had to do with the growth of the nation, not only in commerce but in general knowledge. As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were but very few books to be found in the homes of the people, and not many copies of the Bible. There was but little taste for literature of any kind. But coincident with the rise of industrialism, there appeared monthly periodicals and denominational weekly papers ; there was also an increase in the circulation of English as well as of Welsh books. To pay sixpence for a book was one of the most difficult problems that confronted the illiberal peasant of pre-industrial days. Indeed, it would be true to say that if the opening of the South Wales Collieries and Iron-works had been deferred until the beginning of this century, there would be no Intermediate Schools or University Colleges in Wales to-day.

Not only did the development of the industry give rise to the spread of general knowledge, but to

a knowledge of geography, book-keeping, the art of measurement, mechanics, geology, and the various arts. Even as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the natives of Wales used to speak of the "City of Jamaica," the "River of China," the "Island of Rome," and the "beautiful Mediterranean Lake." They used to dispute, quarrel and fight, over accounts and debts, for the reason that they depended mainly upon their memory. The young man who had gone beyond the *Rule of Three Direct*, was considered a prodigy, and if he possessed any knowledge of Algebra, he was looked upon with awe and fear. The body of the people knew nothing of weights and measures; and the last thing they would think of would be to go to the trouble of measuring fields and waste-land. They looked at the hills and mountains, but did not consider them of any practical value; it did not occur to them that there were any treasures underneath. But the opening of the coal-mines and iron-works by speculators changed all this; it brought the people from the realm of the ideal to the realm of fact, and showed them the necessity of extending the range of their knowledge.

The population of the whole of Wales at the beginning of the nineteenth century was only 587,000, but a hundred years later the population of Wales, including Monmouthshire, was given as 1,720,533. In the Census of 1911, it was given as 2,032,193. The bulk of the increase is confined to the mining communities—Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire. The latter has a population about fifteen times as large as that of a century ago, and if the increase

continues at the present rate, it is reasonable to expect that a hundred years hence Glamorganshire alone will have a population of 2,000,000. It is the richest, busiest and most enterprising county in Wales.

What is the result? A country which is an infinitesimal speck on the map of Europe, and the smallest portion of the United Kingdom, covering but a small area, its greatest length from north to south being only 135 miles, and its breadth from east to west only 95 miles, has, in consequence of the discovery and development of its mineral wealth, sprung from obscurity into great prominence, and has become an important factor not only in the life of Great Britain, but in the life of the civilized world. It can boast of a population as intelligent and as prosperous as any in the United Kingdom.

The coalfield of South Wales is the largest in Europe, and, with the exception of that of Nova Scotia, contains a greater vertical thickness of strata than any coalfield in the world. It produces an average of 900,000 tons of coal per week, and about two-thirds of this is now used by the British Admiralty, the British and Allied Armies. The balance is consumed inland in this country, particularly by railways, steel-works (which are making munitions) and by households in the south-western counties that are dependent on a full and uninterrupted supply of South Wales and Monmouthshire coal. South Wales coal is the backbone of supply to France; it is vital to the British Navy, to our mercantile marine and transport, because it is smokeless and gives greater speed.

Little wonder that Viscount Rhondda said that

coal was something "to inspire a poet." Coal has done for Wales what her poets, preachers, school-masters, historians, musicians, politicians and writers have not done, and could never have done. It has produced a new order of things in every rank of Welsh society; it has made a poor country rich, increased its purchasing power a hundredfold, raised its credit among the nations of the world, and made its citizens strong and self-reliant. It has given money a new social significance, elevated the standard of living, increased the prestige of the worker, caused the people to take interest in other races and countries, and to acquire a better and a more extensive knowledge of their own country—its material resources and potentialities.

It has brought wealth, and indomitable industry which is the father of wealth; it has augmented the activity of the nation, not only in commerce, but in literature, politics and religion; it has added to the cerebral power of the nation, and to its intelligence. Great indeed is the debt of the nation and of the State to the men who, by investing their wealth and by devoting their time and energy, have made the development of the coal industry possible and profitable. What the State neglected to do, or failed to see, they saw and did. Great also is the debt of the nation and of the State to the men who, by their toil, have helped to develop the industry, and to create the wealth which the industry has produced.

Incalculable as has been the effect of the opening of the coal-mines and iron-works upon Wales in general—and the end is not yet—its effect upon the miners themselves has created a problem which

demands the earnest consideration of every citizen, patriot and statesman, irrespective of party or political creed. The interest in the Welsh miner will increase rather than diminish as time goes on. This industrial revolution has been the cause and the effect of a spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction among both the surface and underground workers, which has resulted in a continuous demand for higher wages, a larger share of the profits of the coal industry, as well as a larger share in the management, and, of recent years, for the possession of the industry itself to be worked in the interests of the miners.

It has given them a motive of revolt against Capitalists and the capitalistic system, for the twofold reason that, as they allege, the workers have been exploited for the benefit of Capitalists, and that the capitalistic system is not only a vicious and a tyrannical one, but that the effect of its operation on the character of the Capitalists themselves has been such, that they have done collectively what they would not have done individually. Indeed, side by side with the growth of Capitalism there has been a growing antagonism to the principle upon which it is founded, and to the accumulation of capital in the hands of the few ; hence the substitution of ethical standards, as conceived by the miners themselves, for the old orthodox ethical standards.

It would be unjust not to say that the best informed among the miners and their leaders have some knowledge of political economy ; but of the history of Capitalism and of the part it has played in the past in the promotion of civilization, they do not seem to possess any knowledge, or if they do,

they ignore it. Historically speaking, Capitalism has been a force on the side of freedom, not because it cared for freedom and civilization as such, but because it needed these as conditions of growth. Capitalism enabled men to break the old chains of feudalism; it destroyed the privilege of birth, though it substituted the privilege of wealth. Capitalism has been a beneficent factor in the world's progress towards equal rights and liberty. But Capitalism is now in an overgrown state, and freedom and civilization seem to be its enemies.

In no part of the country is the antagonism to Capitalism more fierce and general than in the South Wales coalfields. It is regarded and spoken of as the tap-root of all industrial evil. This attitude reminds one of the monk who was so enraged at that remarkable satirical work entitled *Encomium Moriae*, or *Praise of Folly*, written by Erasmus, that he went to the length of buying a picture of Erasmus and hanging it up in his study that he might daily have the pleasure of spitting at it.

The questions that have engrossed the minds of the miners are, How did these capitalists acquire their capital and what use have they made of it? If they are told that they acquired it partly by inheritance, they ask, How did they come by that inheritance? If they are told that they acquired it partly by speculation and investment in uncertain colliery undertakings, they ask, Have they not invested and extended the scope of their investments at the expense of the miners, by taking in the form of dividends more than their due share of the fruits of labour?

These are some of the reflections that have provoked and intensified the industrial unrest, which has now become historic in the annals of the South Wales coalfields. The miners have persuaded themselves that they have been the victims of the capitalistic system ; and as it is impossible for one man to struggle single-handed against it, they have combined in order to overthrow it root and branch. During the years immediately preceding the War, this antagonism to Capitalism had assumed a very acute form. It would not only be wrong but fatal to the highest interests of the community, to suppose that the outlets for the discontent caused by this industrial revolution, and this antagonism to Capitalism have been closed through the War. The blunt truth is, that the attitude of both Coalition Governments has added fuel to the flame, and hastened the final stage of the conflict between Labour and Capitalism, or between the employers and the employed ; it has made the condition of the employer more unendurable and that of industrial society more unstable.

Indeed, the way in which the Coalition Governments have handled the mining problem in South Wales, is but a poor example of statesmanship. Instead of facing the true facts and upholding the interests of the community and of the nation, and penalizing the worst of the time losers and agitators, they have pandered to the extremists and have granted practically every demand made, thereby officially constituting them a privileged class in the community. The result is that wages have been practically doubled since the War started, output

reduced, and a new programme formulated which has for its object another series of wage advances and allowances coupled with a reduction of working days with a full week's pay, and a reduction of working hours in each day. Also the maintenance after the War of all the wage advances secured during the War, and that regardless of any fall there may be in food prices ; a still higher minimum wage, several extra allowances, pensions and paid holidays. As to the effect of such demands, if conceded, upon the manufacturing and shipping trade and upon the community in general they are utterly indifferent. There are certain dangers the dimensions of which may by wisdom and firmness be reduced, even if they cannot be altogether averted. But the extremists have been led to think that they have only to threaten and demand in order to receive ; they are also persuaded that they have got the Government and the community in their grip ; and they have been encouraged in this belief by the fact that the Government has been paying less and less regard to the claims of capital, and more and more regard to the claims of labour. There has been no effective attempt to strike an even balance between the two claims, and to do justice to both.

Sir A. Stanley, the President of the Board of Trade, said in the House of Commons in July : " In the case of no class of workers had the percentage increases occasioned by general wage advances been anything approaching the higher figure given by the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal-owners' Association." To this statement the following reply was made on behalf of the Coal-owners'

Association. " In July, 1914, the weekly minimum wage of these particular workmen, not in receipt at that time of the bonus turn, which in 1915 was extended to all underground, night or afternoon shift men, was 21s. 7d. a week. At the time the coal-owners issued their recent statement, the weekly minimum wage of these particular workmen was 55s. 9d., representing a war period increase of 34s. 2d. per week, or 158 per cent. But that is the minimum increase in the case of such workmen working full time. It is exclusive of extras or allowances; but these particular workmen continued to receive their supplies of house coal at the old pre-war customary nominal price. For the whole of the coalfield the average pit-mouth price at which the miners are receiving their supplies of house coal is about 5s. 6d. per load of between 16 cwt. and 20 cwt. as required. In the early part of June the statutory price for house coals in South Wales was 9s. per ton at the pit-mouth for ordinary consumers above the pre-war price, and it is not a high figure to estimate the monetary value of the miner of his immunity from liability for the payment of this extra price at 2s. 5d. per week. If, therefore, this additional 2s. 5d. is added to the increase in the minimum wage it gives the workman concerned a total increase, direct and indirect, in wages of 36s. 7d., representing an increase of practically 170 per cent. That was the 'higher figure' mentioned in the coal-owners' statement, and we will leave the facts to speak for themselves. It was never claimed that it was typical, and no enquiries were made of the South Wales Coal-owners by the

Board of Trade as to the extent to which this particular case obtained before the President of the Board made his statement in the House of Commons."

There is one other assertion in Sir Albert Stanley's statement which should be corrected. He is reported to have said that in April, 1917, the increase in the general wage rates in the South Wales coalfield was about 46 per cent above the rates in July, 1914. The real facts are as follows: In July, 1914, the general wage rate in this coalfield was 60 per cent on the standard rates of 1879; in April, 1917, it was 133 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent on the standard rates of 1879, the variations in the general wage rates over the war period having been as follows:

May 3rd, 1915 (war bonus)	. Increase	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ %
August 21st, 1915 Increase	18 $\frac{3}{4}$ %
December 1st, 1915 Decrease	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ %
June 1st, 1916 Increase	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ %
December 1st, 1916 Increase	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ %

which gives a net increase in the general wage rate during the period of the war up to April 1917, of 77 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent on the standard rates of 1879. This is, however, exclusive of the bonus turn concession, which was extended in 1915 to, roughly, half the workmen employed in the South Wales coalfield, the payment on these enhanced earnings of the general wage rates, as well as other concessions of monetary value which were given to the workmen at that time.

On May 16th, 1916, at the request of the Government, a joint meeting of representatives of the colliery owners of Great Britain and the executive committee of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain

was held in London, to consider what steps could be taken, with a view to increasing the output of the collieries in order to meet the requirements of the Admiralty, the Allies, the munition works, which then, as at present, were in excess of the supplies and continually increasing. The decision unanimously arrived at at this meeting was, the appointment in each of the coalfields of the country of a local committee to devise and put into operation effective machinery to secure the attendance of all the workmen employed to the fullest possible extent, and to enquire into the circumstances of cases in which workmen, although presenting themselves at the mine, were not provided with work.

In the South Wales coalfield the Conciliation Board accordingly appointed a joint sub-committee to consider the problem, and that committee drew up a scheme under which a joint committee was to be appointed at each pit to enquire into the causes of the absence of individual workmen, to post at the pit-head each day the number of absentees, and to report from time to time to the Conciliation Board Committee the working of the scheme. In spite, however, of the joint request of the London conference, the scheme in this coalfield was taken up only half-heartedly by the miners and ultimately fell through.

The total number of associated collieries in the district at that time was 308. At only one-third, or about 95 of these, however, were the joint pit committees formed, and after a short trial the workmen at a conference at Cardiff decided to dissolve even those joint committees which had been formed.

Yet the Government took it all "lying down"; if the mine-owners and not the workmen had proved false to their word, and had abandoned the scheme, it would have been proclaimed from Dan to Beer-sheba, especially by a certain section of the Press.

Probably no other employer, with the exception, perhaps, of the late Sir William Thomas Lewis, afterwards known as Lord Merthyr, has played a stronger part than Viscount Rhondda in this conflict between Capital and Labour in the South Wales coalfields; or between Individualism on the one hand, and Socialism and Syndicalism on the other. But, as we have already observed, no Capitalist, as employer, was more misunderstood than Viscount Rhondda. Socialists and Syndicalists in general, though there have been one or two exceptions, have been unable to bring themselves to believe that a Capitalist can be just and humane.

Money, *per se*, never appealed to Viscount Rhondda, but rather as a symbol of power, or of exchange. The mere reputation of being a rich man or a millionaire had no fascination for him. "The man who seeks money for itself," he was reported in the press to have said, "is a small person. But the big man seeks money for what it enables him to do. He is born perhaps in a village shop or the slum of a city; he feels in boyhood a passion which absorbs him; he works hard at his books; while others play and fool away their time and their talents, he is organizing his brain; and then, this passion to escape from his conditions brings him success; he is rich, he need toil no longer, he can be lazy for the rest of his life—gaping at the universe. The small

man retires ; the big man, his passion stronger for success, works ten times harder. He desires to handle life itself. There's something bigger than his business."

Viscount Rhondda's view was that money stands for the production of industry. Though he was the architect of his own career and fame, he was not the architect of his own fortune, for he inherited its foundation from his father. Indeed, his ancestors were people of some substance. Both on his father's and mother's side there was considerable property. But what money Viscount Rhondda inherited or accumulated by investment and speculation, he did not use or waste in an unproductive manner. What wealth he acquired, he acquired through productive expenditure in the interests of labour as well as of his own, and of his own in the capacity of an employer of labour. But he expected a reasonable equivalent from labour, though it was felt by some that he got more than an equivalent. He knew the difference between productive and unproductive expenditure. This was one of the secrets of his success as a business man.

Another secret of his success lay in the fact that he had made himself a complete master of all the intricacies of business. Gladstone once confessed in Parliament that no member knew more than Viscount Rhondda, then known as D. A. Thomas, about the commercial side of the coal trade ; and Mr. Asquith paid him a similar compliment in Parliament on the day of his death. His words were : " Lord Rhondda, whom we used to know as Mr. D. A. Thomas, was a member of this House

during almost the whole time I have been here. While he was with us in the House of Commons he was always a noteworthy personality, characterized by singular financial and commercial acumen, versatile and widespread activities, and a rare independence of judgment."

In addition to the factors which we have already named, and which account for his success as a business man, there was his concentration of purpose ; his foresight and insight ; his preference for the methods of reasonableness ; his grasp of details ; and his almost perfect knowledge of the psychology of the Welsh miner as well as of his social conditions and upbringing, and his own deep and genuine sympathy with his life and ways of thought.

No man, or employer of labour, was further from those theories which swagger in the market place under the name of Socialism and Syndicalism. In so far as Socialism, or any ism whatever its name, seeks to diminish injustices or to improve the social and economic condition of the working classes, he was a pronounced Socialist. He even welcomed legitimate and reasonable interference on the part of the State, to protect the masses against employers and landlords who misused their power, or to organize the forces of the community for general purposes. Although there were many clauses in the last Education Bill which he disapproved of, he looked favourably upon the school attendance that diminishes the competition of child labour.

Strongly as he believed in the competitive system and in the rivalry of individualism, which has been an incentive to progress and freedom, and to the

cultivation of democratic sentiments, he did not hold it as an article of faith, as did Adam Smith, and as the wealthy classes of England did for several generations, that the law ought not to interfere between employer and employed. He believed in the right of workmen to combine, as he believed in the right of employers to combine. Being endowed with the attributes of a statesman, the temperament of a moralist, and that rare gift which enables a man to live in the future as well as in the past, thereby to foresee remote contingencies and generally unexpected changes, he knew that to have denied these and other rights would have been an act of oppression and to provoke revolution.

But he was equally convinced that undue and excessive interference on the part of the State between employer and employed, and the enforcing of the State into what is called the organization and the control of industry under normal conditions, would be a bad thing for democracy as well as for the State itself, if only for the reason that it would destroy private enterprise. He held that there was, or should be, a limit to State interference, and that while the State ought not to oppose popular movements, it ought to restrain and guide, even oppose, them when they clashed with the wider interests of the State.

He also allowed that the condition of the working classes ought to be bettered, and that it could be bettered, but not by rhetoric or charity, for charity—as he rightly thought—is what the British working man does not want, and that charity will not save him in the last extremity. He knew how easily

the pride and sensitiveness of the working classes, could be offended. From the beginning to the end of his business life he dwelt as little as possible on the benevolent side, chiefly for the reason that he had a firm conviction that the only means by which the condition of the working classes could be altered and improved, was by an intelligent and a sympathetic application of business principles and methods, to such matters as closely concern the industrial classes. He did not think that the application of such privileges and methods was primarily the duty of others, but also his own. Neither did he think it desirable that the industrial classes should look up to the State to take the lead in industrial undertakings.

Viscount Rhondda did not, as a Capitalist, claim the right to profits extorted at the expense of labour, though this was always charged against him. The earnestness with which he repudiated the statements that were constantly being made by the miners' representatives, showed how keenly he felt the imputation that he, as the representative of the mine-owners, or of the Cambrian Combine, was unfairly and dishonestly using his power to the detriment of the workers. On the contrary, he claimed that labour and those who fought for the rights of labour, were unmindful of the services which he and other Capitalists had rendered to the Welsh mining community. While he understood and appreciated the conditions under which the miners had to toil for their daily bread, he claimed to be a toiler himself, and a toiler in the interests of the miner and of the community.

Not only did he employ labour, but he found a market for the products of the worker ; otherwise there would be no work for the workers. Their part was to toil with their hands, his was to organize and to spend a life of anxious thought and ceaseless effort, exhausting his nervous system, and harnessing nature's forces in such a manner as would provide work for those who live by the sweat of their brow. Civilization owes its existence in the main, not to the many, but to the few ; not to the workers, great as has been their contribution to the creation of wealth and the progress of civilization. What the masses seem to forget is their debt to the individual thinker, the speculator, the pioneer, who opens up the avenues of industry ; surely he has the right to reap the rewards of his efforts.

The pioneers of primitive legislation were the speculative thinkers, not the masses ; it was so in the history of Greece and Rome. What is true of ancient is also true of modern times. Factory legislation owes its first impulse to Robert Owen ; the abolition of the slave trade to Wilberforce ; the reform of the prison system to the efforts of Howard ; the repeal of the Corn Laws to Cobden and Bright. Modern Germany is the creation of the policy of Bismarck, though the conception of imperial dominion, erroneously ascribed to him, must be attributed to Kant, for he it was who first created the spirit of exalted egoism which has infected every class and grade of German society.

Among the thinkers and the organizers of industry Viscount Rhondda occupies a very conspicuous place. There was no exaggeration in applying to

him the title of the "Coal King," and volumes could be written on the very able manner in which he steered his own and his fellow shareholders' interests through the troublous tides of industrial unrest in the South Wales coalfields. Being a highly sensitive man, though he claimed to have the skin of a rhinoceros, it must have caused him pain to witness the interference of Government representatives who knew infinitely less than he did about the mining industry in its various aspects.

But great as was the part which he personally played in the development of the coal industry in South Wales, the foundation had already been well laid. The intrinsic worth and national value of Welsh steam coal had been brought to the attention of the public and the State ten years before he and his elder brother, Mr. J. H. Thomas, took charge of the Cambrian collieries. It was Richard Fothergill, who was elected as joint member with Henry Richard for the Merthyr Boroughs at the election of 1868, who brought the value of Welsh steam coal to the notice of the public at large. In a speech which he delivered in August, 1870, he referred to the important message which Admiral Napier had, some time before that, sent to the Government: "Supply me with Welsh steam coal, or I cannot be answerable for the safety of the fleet." This caused great resentment among the miners and mine-owners in the North of England, and Mr. Richard Fothergill was made the target of much adverse criticism, but with the loyal assistance of Sir Hussy Vivian, M.P. for the Swansea division, he proved his case and the soundness of Admiral Napier's view.



J. H. THOMAS

Mr. Fothergill was a very enterprising man. Indeed, he was one of the pioneers of the coal industry in South Wales, and were it not for his activities things would not be as prosperous as they are to-day. When his father, Thomas Fothergill, Chepstow, bought the Abernant iron and coal works, he appointed his son, Richard, as manager. In the course of time Richard became proprietor; subsequently he started other works at Dan-y-Deri, Llwydcoed, and other places; but, by relying too much upon his Welsh managers, his ventures proved a loss, with the result that he disposed of his works and retired. He ceased to represent Merthyr in 1880, the very year in which Viscount Rhondda left Cambridge for Cardiff to join Mr. O. H. Riches in the sale department of the Cambrian collieries, of which firm Viscount Rhondda and his brother, Mr. J. H. Thomas, became managing partners on the death of Mr. O. H. Riches, in 1877. It was carried on as a private business under their control until 1895, when the Cambrian Collieries Ltd. was formed with a share debenture capital of £600,000.

One should not omit to mention, in this connection, the name of another South Wales coal magnate, who played a very conspicuous part in the development of the mining industry. Sir William Thomas Lewis, afterwards known as Lord Merthyr, was a man of peculiar genius, who possessed great business ability, which enabled him to accumulate a considerable fortune. Like Viscount Rhondda, he had his full share of censure and praise; some of his actions provoked the colliers and his critics to the use of quite uncomplimentary language. Sternness, rather

than mildness, was his great personal characteristic, which proved a very useful asset in those stirring times. Indeed, so great and varied were his activities that a separate treatise might be written on him.

Lord Merthyr was the son of T. W. Lewis, Abercanaid House, Merthyr Tydvil, where he was born in 1837. He was made K.B. in 1885, created a baronet in 1896, and K.C.V.O. in 1907. He was member of Council of Civil Engineers ; F.G.S.; Past President South Wales Institute of Engineers ; Past President of the Mining Association of Great Britain ; Past President of the Institute of Mining Engineers and Vice-President of the Iron and Steel Institute ; Vice-President of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers ; Chairman of the Monmouth and South Wales Board of Examination for Mining Certificates ; Founder and Chairman of the Sliding Scale, and also of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Miners' Provident Fund ; served for many years as a member of the Royal Commission on Coal Mines, Royal Commission on Royalties, Royal Commission on Labour, the Royal Commission on the action of coal dust in mines ; member of the Royal Commission on Coal Supplies ; member of the Royal Commission on Trades Disputes ; Sheriff of Breconshire, 1882 ; and member of Tariff Commission. He gave the sum of one thousand pounds conditionally towards establishing a Mining Chair in the University College of South Wales, an important initial step in furthering the interest of scientific research in the Principality. The present Lord Merthyr lives at Hean Castle, Saundersfoot.

It was in the early nineties that Viscount Rhondda, or " D. A.," as he was then and afterwards familiarly

known in the Welsh coalfields, came into the lime-light of public life. It was in connection with the Welsh miners' agitation against the adverse effect of the sliding scale for wages then in force. They claimed that average selling prices below a certain figure should not affect their wages, and in 1896 Lord Rhondda proposed a scheme for so controlling output that extreme fluctuations in prices might be avoided. He was then taken by the miners as their champion against the undercutting of prices by salesmen and middlemen of which they complained.

After his return as member for Parliament for the Merthyr Boroughs, in 1888, in consequence of the retirement of Mr. C. H. James, M.P., then the colleague of Mr. Henry Richard, Viscount Rhondda somewhat relaxed his interest in business affairs, but some four years before he retired from the House of Commons he resumed his active relationship with the coal trade. "Coal," he said to an interviewer just before his death, "has always struck me as something to inspire a poet. It is the source of physical power. It is the means whereby modern existence moves at so terrific a pace. It enables man to dominate the conditions of his existence. What is man without power but a slave, but an animal? It is man's oppugnance to nature, it is the Prometheus in the soul of man which has saved humanity from stagnation. The Socialists begin to see the value of the organizer. They no longer abuse the Capitalist."

Viscount Rhondda's interest, however, was not confined to the coal industry. He was among the first to realize the coming invasion of the coal trade by the oil industry. He was not under the delusion

that oil would at any time completely oust coal, but he foresaw that oil would be a valuable alternative fuel, also that within certain geographical limits it would economically be preferable to coal for burning under boilers. These were some of the considerations which induced him, about 1911, to commence prospecting in the mineral oil resources of Western and North-Western Canada. These exploratory investigations were in process at the time of his death.

Geologists were engaged by him to investigate in regions that had never before been geologically mapped. The results were not communicated to the public, but he and those with whom he was associated were convinced that bituminous wealth of vast extent was to be found in those remote parts of the Empire. We are told that the immense area over which lies the "Tarsand" deposit contains enough oil to supply the world for hundreds of years to come. These facts show that the death of Viscount Rhondda was not only a great loss to the coal, but also to the oil, industry.

On his retirement from Parliament, he devoted himself exclusively to business affairs. Indeed, business had always had a great attraction for him more especially after his Parliamentary experience. "Business," he was reported to have said, "has this great attraction, that it offers the most splendid rewards. We are beginning to realize it in England, as the Americans realized it long ago. Why do those Americans who have made vast sums of money still remain in business? For the money? Not at all; not in the least. It is because the greater the business grows the more it employs all their powers, and the more money it produces the more it enables them

to do things. Business is a modern equivalent for war. If Napoleon had been born fifty years ago in America he would have been a dangerous rival to Mr. Rockefeller. Business attracts the man who loves conquest, who loves to pit himself against vast odds, who could not live without the strain of effort. To the scholar his books, to the poet his mountains and streams, to the man of science his riddle of the universe ; to the conqueror his difficulties."

There are few, if any, parallels to the extraordinary achievements with which his name is associated from the time he resumed active relationships with the coal trade in 1906 down to 1914. They won for him a fame over two continents. It was in 1907 that he laid the foundation of the Cambrian Combine by the requisition of a controlling interest in the Glamorgan Colliery, though it was not until 1913 that he organized the super-combine of Consolidated Cambrian (Limited), which controls South Welsh coal-mines (of which he had been managing director), producing approximately six million tons a year of steam coal, and employing about 20,000 miners, with a wages bill of over £1,500,000. Of this he was Chairman, and among the other most important companies with which he was prominently associated, were the Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron and Coal Company (itself one of the largest industrial combinations in the country), Rhymney Iron Company, Taff Vale Railway Company, Lysberg (Limited), and a number of companies specially associated with the export and bunkering side of the coal business.

He became associated with, and secured control of, more than thirty colliery, railway, shipping and other industrial concerns in South Wales, in

which many millions of capital were invested. When he became a member of Mr. Lloyd George's Administration, he was chairman, managing director, director or principal shareholder of colliery concerns which handle over 18,000,000 tons of coal annually, employ between 50,000 and 60,000 men, and are capitalized at between £17,000,000 and £18,000,000. He was also associated with shipping firms owning upwards of 100,000 tons dead-weight capacity, whilst his interests in the United States and Canada, which have never been fully disclosed, included not only a colliery in the New River district, but a controlling influence in the Pacific, Peace River, and Athabasca Railway, with a capital of £3,200,000. No one can estimate the potentialities of this region, with its rich oilfields and mineral deposits.

It also deserves to be mentioned that on the outbreak of the War in 1914 he threw himself actively into the work of "capturing German trade," as it was at first called, and recreating under British management some of the best of those German-run businesses in this country, which the War had brought into the controlling hands of the Government. It was he who carried through the acquisition of the Sanatogen business.

We do not profess to have exhausted all the details of his business undertakings ; our object has been in our treatment of this as well as of other phases of his public life, simply to indicate his many activities in broad outlines ; but even these outlines show him to be a man of towering personality, who was equal to every crisis and to every opportunity that came within his reach, and to every duty, whether at home or abroad, that was assigned to him.

CHAPTER VI

VISCOUNT RHONDDA AND HIS CRITICS

THE unrest in the South Wales coalfields has stimulated a great deal of literary activity. A section of the miners' leaders who hold Socialist or Syndicalist views have for a number of years made a lavish use of the press, with the view of creating mistrust and hatred of the mine-owners. That their propaganda has produced its effect cannot be denied. As Lord Rhondda said in one of his letters to the *Daily Telegraph*, it could hardly be otherwise, seeing that the owners have, most unwisely, remained passive, and have done little or nothing to counteract it.

Lord Rhondda's position and activities caused the Socialists and Syndicalists to concentrate their attention upon him, as the chief force, propelling and guiding the policy of the mine-owners. This, necessarily, compelled him to write occasionally to the London and South Wales press concerning the part which capital plays in production, the share and rights of capital, the cost of working the mines, the uncertainty of colliery undertakings, and what the community had gained through private enterprise. The controversy, while not without a personal element from the first, grew to be bitterly personal at

the last, though the bitterness was almost altogether on the part of Lord Rhondda's critics and opponents.

If he lacked fluency of speech, it was otherwise with his pen. When he wrote to the press it was with a definite object in view. His communications were characterized by a certain racy freshness, frankness, incisiveness, and ingeniousness. At times he was caustic, though, perhaps, that is too strong a word for satire of the most good-natured kind.

It was evident from what he said when he gave us some materials and press-cuttings which he desired us to utilize, that he was not content that they should be neglected or forgotten. There is, however, no valid reason for reproducing his correspondence in its entirety, partly for the reason that he repeats himself. Even as far back as the year 1916, he communicated to the press certain views and experiences which he practically communicated during some interviews which he gave this year, and to which we have referred in another chapter. For instance, in his letter of December 7th, 1916, to the *Daily Chronicle*, he says :

"I devoted nearly a quarter of a century of the best years of my life to public work in the House of Commons, and my happiest and proudest memory is the knowledge that I enjoyed the confidence of the miners of South Wales over a longer period and in a larger measure than any man now living, miners' agents not excepted. It was not until the conviction was forced upon me that under no circumstances did my political leaders wish to avail themselves of my services, and that I could be of more use to the community by helping to develop the resources of the country than by perambulating the Parliamentary lobbies at the beck of the party Whip, that I decided to return to commercial life."

In the same issue he says :

" I hope your readers will not doubt my sincerity when I say that I am out for the game, and not for the stakes, and while I admit I find business a very fascinating game, I contend that by increasing the means of subsistence of the people I have in the aggregate contributed more to the material happiness and well-being of Welsh colliery workers and their families than have all the miners' leaders combined, though moved by the best intentions."

Replying to what his anonymous critic conceived to be possible dangers that might accrue to the community after the War, as a consequence of what he termed " Lord Rhondda's activities," and to his criticisms of the proposals which Lord Rhondda had put forward some twenty years ago to prevent undue competition among coal-sellers, and which are set forth in Chapter VII of this work, he says :

" I shall always look back with pride and pleasure on the numerous and enthusiastic meetings of colliery workmen I addressed throughout the coalfield in support of the proposal. Unfortunately, I failed to secure its adoption, but the educative value was such that never since has the price of South Wales coal been so low as it then was, with the result that the foreigner has not been able to exploit the follies of coal-owners, and obtain his requirements at below cost of production, while the wages of colliery workmen are double what they were formerly."

" While I am prepared," he further says, " to accept and indeed to advocate State control in competent hands during the exceptional conditions created by the war, the more I observe the results of State intervention in times of peace the more individualistic do I become. Efficiency is in inverse ratio to State control."

Animadverting upon two leading articles which had appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, and in which he was singled out by name as " an example of the

obstinate employer who is regarded by the Welsh miners with a vehement hostility and rooted mistrust," Lord Rhondda replied on December 5th, 1916 :

"My first experience of public life was on the local authority representing the two Rhondda Valleys. The district was not then divided into wards ; the overwhelming majority of the voters were colliery workmen, and they elected me—a young man fresh from Cambridge—head of the poll, there being about twenty candidates. I had no political organization helping me."

"A few years later, on a by-election occurring in the beginning of 1888, I entered the House of Commons as one of the representatives of Merthyr, the largest mining constituency in the United Kingdom. For fourteen years, from 1892 to 1906, I held the record majority in the Parliamentary history of this country. In 1906, when I asked for a renewal of the confidence of the colliery workmen of Merthyr, I polled 30 per cent more votes than the late Mr. Keir Hardie, the Socialist candidate, and nearly double the votes of the other Liberal candidate. During those years I had no political organization to support me. I should mention that none of the electors were in my employ, though the constituency adjoins that in which the Cambrian collieries are situate.

"In 1910 the Liberals of Cardiff found themselves in difficulty, and very much against the wish of my Merthyr friends I contested Cardiff, mainly a working-class constituency, in which my companies' offices are located, and I was elected after a few weeks' candidature by the largest number of votes ever recorded for any man in the history of the borough. Where in this is there a tittle of evidence of hatred or distrust on the part of Labour towards myself ? I may perhaps be allowed in passing to remind you that when my friend Mr. James Winstone, the President of the South Wales Miners' Federation, with all the prestige and support of that powerful organization behind him, sought the confidence of the electors of Merthyr a year ago they very emphatically declined to extend it to him, though

many thousands of the voters were members of the federation. Since I retired from Cardiff a little fed up, if I may be permitted the expression, with party politics, I have had no means of testing the feeling towards myself through the secret ballot, but not a week passes without my receiving invitations to address meetings of one kind and another in colliery districts.

"To bring my evidence up to date, last week I addressed a meeting in the Workmen's Hall at Ferndale, one of the largest mining villages in the Rhondda and the centre of the collieries of D. Davis and Sons (Ltd.), the company of which I have recently become chairman and managing director, one of my activities which you suggest has irritated many of the miners' leaders. A leading colliery workman and a district Councillor presided over a meeting of 2000 men, women and children. He told me several hundreds were turned from the doors for want of room, and that it was the largest meeting ever held in Ferndale. I never had a more cordial greeting in my life, and if those present at the meeting resented my taking over the control of the collieries or hated and distrusted me, then I can only say they had an uncommonly funny way of showing it. . . . Personally, I know I have, and I hope I may always continue to have, enemies. I have little use for the man who has not. The scriptural warning, 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you,' has consequently no terror for me. I am content to know that my friends among Welsh colliers are in a very big majority.

"The present difficulty is mainly due to the invertebrate conduct of the Government in the past. There is no call for the hysterics of the London Press, for the owners will loyally carry out the mandate of the Government, whatever it may be, on this occasion as we did last June, when, on the *ex parte* statement of the miners' leaders, the Government set aside the agreement which they had themselves compelled the owners to adopt only a few months previously, and, without hearing our case, conceded the men the 15 per cent they demanded under threat of withholding coal supplies for the Navy.

"You say the dispute is a question of profits, and that no great principle is at stake. To that I entirely demur. The principle involved is the sanctity of a written agree-

ment, the principle, in short, which forms the basis of all business transactions. You speak of the coal-owners as though they comprised just a few wealthy capitalists, seeking their own private personal gain regardless of the national interest. The executive of the South Wales Coal-owners' Association consists mainly, not of employers, but of paid officials, representing several score of thousands of investors. In my capacity as managing director of several colliery companies only I am acting as the trustee of probably not far short of twenty thousand investors, very many of them possessing small means—far less than those of the average colliery workman.

"I would ask you, before you attribute the constantly recurring trouble in South Wales to the obstinacy of the employer, to remember that it is the settled policy of that section of the miners' leaders who preach class war to try and maintain a constant state of irritation.

"May I, in conclusion, express amusement that I should be the only coal-owner you name in this connection, in view of the fact that I advised the Government over two years ago to adopt a course very similar to that which they have now taken, and which apparently you approve. You will understand that my amusement is not lessened when I observe that one of those who has been selected to give effect to the policy is a gentleman who, when I recommended it in 1914, condemned it as impracticable."

It is due to the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, that we should say that he expressed his regret that Lord Rhondda should have supposed that his name was singled out in either of the two articles, to which he referred, by way of opprobrium. On the contrary, he was spoken of in the earlier article as "one of the world's great men of business." He was alluded to by name, said the Editor, merely as the best-known representative of the coal-owners of South Wales. "We," said the Editor, "certainly never wished to minimize the effects of the mining community of the sinister and dangerous

agitation continuously carried on by the Syndicalist leaders, which aims at the subversion of the whole industry."

Lord Rhondda's letter on "The Share of Capital" which was addressed to Mr. Tom Richards, M.P., and which appeared in *The Western Mail*, March 22nd, 1916, we reproduce *in extenso*; it contains much valuable information, and is a sidelight on Lord Rhondda's individual nature and character, as well as on his business acumen and his very extensive knowledge of the subject with which he deals.

"I am sorry I incurred your displeasure by what I told the shareholders of the Cambrian Combine at their annual meeting last month, and I must ask you to make allowance for the position in which I found myself. I was endeavouring to give an account of my stewardship, and vainly attempting to justify in some measure a salary which you will be the first to admit is out of all proportion to the services I render the company—services you would yourself, I feel sure, readily undertake to discharge more efficiently at half the remuneration that I receive.

"Now, what was it I said which has so offended you? You take no exception, so far as I can gather, to my statement that the average wages of colliers at all the collieries of the Combine amounted to little short of 12s. per day, and that the average of all persons employed above and below ground, including boys, amounted to a fraction under 9s. per day, or to my further statement that a considerable percentage of the men, when they attended regularly to their work, were getting over £4 10s. per week; none too much, to my mind, when they earn it.

"But what did so much excite your indignation was (1) my suggestion that, having regard to the uncertainty of colliery enterprise as an investment, and the comparatively short life of colliery undertakings, a participation of one-twelfth, or to the extent of a penny in every shilling, in the joint production of capital and labour was not an undue

share for the ordinary shareholder to receive in an exceptionally prosperous year ; and (2) my unfortunate expression of satisfaction that the relations between the company and their employées were good, in fact better than they had been for years.

“ ‘ Tut, tut ! When did capital produce anything ? ’ you say, having in mind, no doubt, the experience of the South Wales Miners’ Fédération when they invested the funds of the ‘ grimy collier,’ if I may be permitted to quote your description, in a North Wales slate quarry—presumably you believed up to that time that capital was productive, since you deemed it wise to throw these surplus funds of the Fédération into the quarry ? The experience, however, of all capitalists has not been so unfortunate as that of the Fédération.

“ If capital plays no part in production, I agree its employment is certainly not entitled to any share of the proceeds of industry ; if, however, it renders no help, why in the name of common sense employ it at all ? Why does not the Fédération forthwith open up new collieries without regard to capital ? Just imagine the earthly paradise wherein all proceeds went to the workmen, and no more money was wasted on employers, miners’ agents, strikes, or Trade Unions !

“ My dear Tom, I can remember you in your unregenerate days, when you were one of the most bitter enemies of the Fédération. I can also remember in the not very distant past when you professed to be a Liberal, but now that you have become a convert to Socialism I am afraid you haven’t learnt your lesson properly. The orthodox Socialist does not deny the necessity for or the utility of capital, but only asserts that in the public interest this should be provided by the credit of the community or that of the State, and not by individuals.

“ I am not a Socialist myself, but I readily acknowledge there is much to be said for the creed, and were it not for the inherent and consequently ineradicable selfishness of the average man, and my belief that such selfishness when kept within limits is a stimulus that probably makes for material progress, in other words, did I conceive it likely that a scheme of government could be evolved by which the average man might be made an altruist, and be induced

to work as hard for others or for the community in general as he will now do for himself, I might become a Socialist. For, believe me, I am not out for the accumulation of wealth merely for its own sake, but desire, as you do, to make the best use of whatever talent has been entrusted to my care.

"The only value of wealth is the influence and power it places in the hands of its possessor to do good in his time and generation according to his lights. Honestly, what I should fear under a Socialist régime is that instead of labour getting eleven pence in the shilling, as it does now at the Cambrian, the whole production would not amount to tenpence, and, consequently, even when labour secured all, the workman would receive less than he gets now.

"You say you will not pause to argue the issue that capital produces nothing, and there, if I may respectfully say so, you give evidence of your wisdom. You proceed, however, to assert that the man who invests £1,000 in Cambrian ordinary shares is not entitled to receive more by way of interest than the equivalent of the minimum wage—6s. 6d. per day—paid to certain Cambrian workmen, and you complain that I did not in my speech give the percentage of men who 'earn (or, at least, are paid)' less than 7s. 6d. per day. The qualification in brackets, by the way, is yours, not mine.

"Let us examine your proposition a little more closely. Your contention, I take to be, that the method adopted hitherto by economists of the old school of regarding the capital expended in an enterprise as a unit on the one hand, and the whole of the labour employed as an entity on the other, is entirely fallacious, and that the proper mode is to have regard only to the remuneration of individual investors and workmen. But even on that assumption I don't quite understand why you fixed upon the shareholder with a holding of £1,000 and compare him with a workman who earns—I beg pardon, who 'at least is paid'—6s. 6d. per day. I should rather have expected you to have compared the holder of the smallest number of shares with the minimum wage workman, or the largest registered holder, who happens in this instance to be myself, with the most highly paid workman, or, better still, the average shareholder with the average wage earner. If you are entitled to pick out

any shareholder at hazard, as you appear to have done, you would, surely, have made out a better case from your point of view, and, with equal logic, if you had compared my dividend with the earnings of the lowest paid workman.

“ It may, for future guidance, interest you to have some information relative to the holdings of the ordinary shareholders in the Combine, though for the investment of a shilling you could have obtained the fullest particulars at Somerset House. The average holding is £504. The directors and their personal friends hold considerably more than half the ordinary capital, and if the holdings of these are deducted the average holding of the remaining shareholders is £235 each, or less than one-fourth that of the holder whom you selected for purposes of comparison. There are 228 shareholders each with a holding of less than £50, and with an average of £22 each. The smallest holder has precisely £1, and the dividend for the year on his investment amounted to 3s.

“ Now, my dear Tom, if you will only pursue your studies on previous lines, you will find that the lowest paid capitalist in Cambrian receives for the whole year less than one-half of what the lowest paid workman receives every day ; in other words, the minimum wage workman ‘ at least is paid ’ for four hours’ occupation as much as the poor capitalist receives in twelve months ! Then take the 228 shareholders whose average holding is £22 each, and for expressing sympathy with whom I incurred your unsparing castigation—they each receive on an average in twelve months as much as the minimum wage workman is paid in two weeks. Would it be impertinent for me to ask if the Federation only hoped at most to receive for the thousands of pounds they invested in the North Wales slate quarry a dividend equal to the wages of a single quarryman in their employ ?

“ Another point I should like to have made clear is this. Suppose the holder of £1,000 in Cambrian ordinary, who you contend is not entitled to a dividend higher than the equivalent of 6s. 6d. a day, varies his investment and puts £100 into each of ten companies ; is he, according to the new economic school of which you are so distinguished a disciple, entitled to collect 6s. 6d. per day from each venture, if they prove sufficiently profitable, or ten times as much as when he invests all his capital in one enterprise only ?

“ In your last article in the *Western Mail* you condemned Mr. Shaw for accepting too high a remuneration. The chairman of the P.D. is well able to take care of himself, but you have on other occasions commented adversely on the amount of my director’s fees. A fault confessed, they say, is half redressed. Let me, then, frankly admit that my chief, indeed my only, claim to distinction is that I am the most overpaid man in the country with the possible exception of certain miners’ leaders. But what would you have me do, when people are so ill-advised as to pay me these excessive fees? Would you yourself refuse them were you in my unfortunate position? Let me beg of you to have compassion on a poor creature whose business reputation is immeasurably beyond his real merit.

“ You will not, I know, suggest that every member of Parliament is worth £400 a year. Why, there are some that both you and I would consider dear at £2 a week. To carry your argument to a logical conclusion, does it not follow that even you yourself are not entitled to more than 6s. 6d. per day?

“ The other statement you resented in my speech to the Cambrian shareholders was that the relations between the company and their employes were good, and, in fact, better than they had been for years. I had that on what I considered unimpeachable authority, and I expressed my satisfaction at the altered condition of things, a gratification which those present at the meeting shared to the fullest extent. Would you have had us feel otherwise? I am sure you would not, for you are not one of those, of whom there are but too many in political life, who, while preaching peace and goodwill among men on the Sabbath, devote the rest of the week to stirring up strife and ill-blood in the community, and whose work in Parliament largely consists in trying to remedy grievances of their own creation. To such men a better understanding between employers and workmen spells loss of occupation. You, my dear Tom, are not of that type.

“ You have freely criticised me; may I be allowed to make just one criticism in return? In your article in the *Western Mail* you assume the attitude of champion of labour, and throughout suggest that I am antagonistic to its best interests. I know you honestly think so. Now, I

take an entirely different view, and I would in all seriousness suggest that when you have done a tithe—did I say a tithe? rather would I say a fraction of 1 per cent—as much for the welfare of the men as I have done, I mean in providing them with the means to pay for the food and clothing of themselves and their families, it will be time enough for you to begin comparing your services to labour with mine.

“It is hardly for me to advise the member for West Monmouth, but I cannot sometimes help feeling when reading your articles that they are a little too acrid in tone, and calculated to irritate rather than to convince those whom you are anxious to convert to your own way of thinking. May I suggest that you would better serve your purpose were you more to avoid the imputation of evil motives in those from whom you differ, and content yourself with appeals to reason rather than to prejudice?”

“Believe me, my dear Tom, to be,

“Yours very faithfully,

“RHONDDA.

“CAMBRIAN BUILDINGS, CARDIFF,
March 21, 1916”

CHAPTER VII

HIS ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

NO estimate of Viscount Rhondda's life would be complete which did not contain some reference to his work as a statistician and his contribution to economic literature. We do not claim that he was a scientific economist. When we say that he had no economic theories, we mean in the sense in which we might say that a man has no knowledge of psychology, i.e. he has no scientific knowledge. True, every man who has the power of reflection and who thinks, may be said to be, to a more or less limited extent, a psychologist, historian, socialist, or even a philosopher, since every one is seeking to understand the fundamental reasons and causes of things. When, however, we use the term philosopher in a more restricted sense, we mean a person who has attained individual distinction as an expounder or teacher of philosophic thought.

We do not apply the term economist to Viscount Rhondda in this restricted sense ; indeed, we could not. Every business man possesses certain ideas of an economic character, so did Viscount Rhondda ; though he seems to have acquired a profounder knowledge of economic theories, and more especially of the economic theory of monopoly, than any

other business man, or any student of economy in Wales both past and present, with the exception of Robert Owen, whose knowledge in this regard was far more varied and extensive. Owen was not, of course, a monopolist, but a Socialist and a Reformer, and the position in which he stood was entirely different from that of Lord Rhondda.

While Owen acknowledged that the right of combination belongs to men in all classes and communities, he maintained that to the working men combination was essential in order to oppose the individual interest which was then fast establishing itself, as the all-sufficient and sole regulating force in everything connected with business. He was impressed with the conviction that it was criminal to appropriate the wealth then rapidly accumulating, and the power it brought with it, to the creation of large private fortunes. Whether Viscount Rhondda acquired his practical acquaintance with economic theories, or with the theory of monopoly in particular, by study or from experience, we should not like to say ; probably both.

In 1896, he wrote a pamphlet on the regulation of outputs and prices, which, it has been claimed, influenced the 1902 Budget of Sir Michael Hicks Beach (afterwards Lord St. Aldwyn) ; and in 1903 he read a very elaborate paper on Coal Exports, 1850-1900, before the Royal Statistical Society, which was printed in book form for private circulation. It makes ninety-five pages of closely written matter, and contains a map showing the ten groups of markets, which include the markets in the supply of which Great Britain had, up to that time, pos-

sessed practically a monopoly in respect to sea-borne coal. It also contains a mass of complicated figures and statistics which, for obvious reasons, we could not reproduce here. Moreover, they are meant for experts, not for the general reader. The paper deals with coal exports as compared with production and with the total value of exports ; it gives the earliest record of export coal, together with statistics for the first half of the nineteenth century, and of export duties from 1800 to 1850.

There is a diagram showing the stationary character of our exports other than coal during the decade preceding 1903. It describes the progress of foreign countries in general exports ; the material progress of this nation in the last quarter of the century, and the relative retrogression, which Viscount Rhondda did not think was due to Free Trade ; the steadiness in the growth of our total exports of coal ; the proportion of British coal consumed by foreign countries ; coal prices and prices of commodities generally ; the cause of the wide fluctuation in coal prices ; a comparison of the coal famines of 1873 and 1900 ; the direction in which our coal exports have expanded ; the relative importance of foreign markets ; the relative efficiency of British and foreign coal ; the relative importance of home districts at different periods. There is also a table showing the proportion of coal shipped from the respective home districts to the respective markets abroad.

The pamphlet which Viscount Rhondda wrote in 1896 was meant for two classes of readers, colliery owners and their employés—differing widely in the

source and degree of their information. In the Introduction, and particularly in the Appendices, we find a great array of complicated figures which we venture to think the employés, for whose instruction they were partly prepared, would neither understand nor take the trouble to understand. These figures show the quantities of coal shipped from the several ports of the United Kingdom from 1885 to 1895, and the countries to which British coal was exported during the same period, and the shipments of coal from the several ports of the United Kingdom to different foreign countries in 1891 and 1895.

There are also figures and statements showing the destination of coal shipped foreign from coalfields of the United Kingdom in 1891 and 1895; the destination of coal shipped foreign from the several coalfields of the United Kingdom and also from London during the year 1868; the percentages of coal shipped from the Bristol Channel, of the total shipped from the United Kingdom to the several markets abroad, the percentages shipped to the several foreign markets, the total shipped from Bristol Channel ports, and of the total produced in South Wales and Monmouthshire; the quantity of coal shipped from Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Llanelly during the years 1886 to 1895, foreign, coastwise and for bunkers; the average monthly shipments after making allowances for the number of working days in the month; the actual shipments per month, the excess or deficiency from the average, the percentages, excess or deficiency, the number of days worked per week by colliers in South

Wales and Monmouthshire, the price of best steam coal per ton, and the average freights to Genoa ; the number of days per week worked in 1894, 1895 and 1896 by colliers in the several coalfields in the United Kingdom.

There are also figures and statements showing the production, imports, exports of coal, etc., relating to the United Kingdom and foreign countries for the years 1888, 1891 and 1894, and relating to the British Colonies and Possessions during the same period. In addition to these there are figures and statements showing the quantity of coal, coke and patent fuel (domestic produce) exported from Germany during the year 1894, from France and Belgium during 1895, and from New South Wales in each of the years 1893, 1894 and 1895 ; the quantity of coal exported from the United States in each of the same years ; tables showing the export of coal from England and Scotland in the last five months of the years 1893 and 1892 respectively, and the quantity of coal, and the quantity of coal sent coastwise. Some of these figures were compiled from the Board of Trade Annual Paper, some were extracted from the report of the Royal Commission on Coal in 1871 ; some were prepared by Mr. W. Gascoigne Dalziel, late Secretary of the Monmouthshire and Coal-owners' Association, but the majority of them were taken from Brown's Export List.

The purpose that Viscount Rhondda had in view in writing this paper and compiling these statistics was, to attempt a practical solution of the complex and difficult problem arising from the unsatisfactory condition of the coal trade in South Wales and

throughout the country. He felt that the time had come for colliery owners to combine for their own protection. The tendency at that time was towards combinations, one of which had been arranged by a large section of the buyers of coal just about the time that he prepared this paper. His contention was that this particular combination was not in the interest of producers, and that it would be in the power of this new ring to fix a maximum price when making their purchases ; also that sellers would only have one purchaser instead of many to deal with, and would have to pay whatever price the sellers might fix upon.

The most important combination, however, was that of the ship owners because it was of a hostile character in so far as it affected the Welsh Coal Trade, and because it threatened the interest of the coal-owners. Viscount Rhondda's argument was that these combinations would have to be met with combination on the part of the coal-owners.

While there had been during the previous twelve months a steady advance in the general business of the country, there had been a distinct relapse in the coal industry ; and, whereas the railway companies, who required coal to carry on their business and who conveyed the coal to its destination, were earning higher rates of profit than they had done for many years, collieries were earning less, and, in many instances, working at an actual loss. The shipping trade had sprung into an unexampled prosperity, homeward freights having practically doubled during the previous year. Colliery owners were obliged to export large quantities of coal at less than cost

price, and were actually giving away to the foreigner our mineral wealth, which is by no means inexhaustible and cannot be replaced. The conclusion that Viscount Rhondda had come to was, that the mine-owners had no other alternative but to combine, not only in their own interest but also in the interest of the coal trade itself. This is an important fact, and should be considered in the light of the charges brought against him, to the effect that his Combines were arranged purely for the purpose of crushing the workmen and their Federation, and of accumulating wealth. For years this charge had been levelled against him by Socialists and Syndicalists, as well as by many of the miners' leaders who had not imbibed the socialist and syndicalist doctrines.

His examination of the causes of the depression of the coal industry led him to the conclusion, that it was not due to any falling off in the demand for Welsh coal, as was shown by the fact that the exports from Cardiff had practically doubled during the previous ten years. The demand for Welsh coal had steadily increased both at home and abroad. The depression and the falling in prices was due, he held, not to foreign competition—though it had somewhat influenced the shipping into some countries—but to an excess of supply and an undue competition among producers of coal in this country.

He suggested that the competition that Welsh coal had to meet, could be met by his scheme of combination without lessening exports or bringing foreign coal into serious competition, at the same time advancing prices. As to the economic objec-

tion to an arrangement for maintaining and raising prices by combination, on the ground that it interferes with the free play of supply and demand and militates against the well-being of the community as a whole, his reply was that this objection was common to any scheme of this kind ; also that, as Adam Smith the father of economic science, had observed, there were circumstances peculiar to the production of coal which differentiated it from the general laws of price applicable to most other commodities.

Viscount Rhondda also claimed that in his scheme for the relief of the depression of the coal industry, he recognized that prices must always be determined by the laws of supply and demand ; but owing to the special condition under which coal is produced, it is requisite to regulate the supply. He further claimed that a rise in the price of coal and the constant distribution of several additional million pounds in the district, would promote the general well-being of the locality, and that as his proposal only sought to secure a reasonable return for capital, and fair wages for the workmen, it needed no justification from a moral standpoint ; for in addition to these considerations it was manifestly in the interest of those engaged in and about the coalfields that the causes of the depression should be removed, and his only object was to remove them.

Another argument which he advanced in favour of the regulation of supply was, that inasmuch as coal is not an article of luxury but a prime necessity, and cannot be dispensed with when prices are high,

even a small deficiency in the supply may send up prices 20 or 30 per cent ; and an industry worked by steam must have coal or stop. Suppose, he said, that at a price of ten shillings per ton, the requirements of consumers were just met by all the collieries working at full time, a sudden falling off in supply and a sudden increase in demand may advance prices to twelve or thirteen shillings per ton, or even more.

As with coal so with corn, a small deficiency in the produce of corn compared with the average rate of consumption, occasionally causes a rise in price very much beyond the ratio of the defect, and that when nothing in the state of politics or of the currency could have been suspected to have had any influence. Viscount Rhondda's great point was to induce those who are engaged in the coal industry to realize this law of price. If, as he said, a 5 per cent reduction in output only led to a 5 per cent advance in price, which under the sliding scale would give them about $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent advance in wages, his scheme would admittedly be of no advantage to them ; but if the 5 per cent reduction led to a 20 per cent advance, it would be a different matter. If a deficiency of supply only led to a proportionate increase in the price of coal, it would not be of any advantage to the workmen to join any combination, the object of which was to raise prices by regulating supply.

It may be observed that there was nothing new in Viscount Rhondda's plan or proposal. The principle had already been recognized, and had been successfully applied in one important British indus-

try. A very similar proposal had been laid before the coal-owners of Monmouthshire by Mr. Wenham of Birmingham a few years before, and a similar scheme had been in operation in the Australian coal trade. Viscount Rhondda anticipated possible objections to his scheme by saying that no attempt was made to fix a minimum price, or to deal with prices directly at all ; or to give a maximum output, while, so far from running up prices to any extravagant figure, the system would practically cease to operate when prices reached a profitable level, when, in fact, the want of it would no longer be felt.

As to the prevailing opinion among South Wales colliers that a low range of prices had been brought about by undue competition among South Wales producers themselves, an opinion shared by commercial men at the shipping ports, he held that the opinion was not a sound one, though it would appear to be borne out by an examination of the exports, which showed that the demand for Welsh steam coal had been an almost progressive one, and that consequently the fall in prices must be due to an over supply. This argument, he held, was not a conclusive one, for it could with reason be urged : " Yes, but you must show that the fall in price is not the result of competition from other sources of supply, and that the fall has not largely stimulated this progressive demand by opening out fresh markets and enabling us to cope with foreigners in their own and neutral markets, and that, in short, had prices maintained the level of 1891, there would have been anything like the increased demand."

Viscount Rhondda did not consider it necessary

for him to prove that the high level of 1890 and 1891 could be maintained without interfering materially with the demand, because his scheme did not propose to raise prices to any extravagant height. All it proposed to do was to raise them to such a level as would secure a reasonable margin of profit and prevent coal being sold at a loss. He claimed to have shown that such a level as he indicated could be maintained for the special article produced in the coal industry, without materially affecting the demand. If this level, he said, could not be maintained, and if the depression was likely to become more acute and pronounced and to be of long duration, then the outlook was indeed gloomy.

All he asked was a twelve months' trial for his scheme, leaving everybody free to terminate any agreement that might be entered into to give it effect without notice at the expiration of the twelve months, the agreement, in fact, unless previously renewed, to terminate by effluxion of time at the expiration of twelve months. Should the trial be satisfactory, then it would be competent for the parties to it to enter into fresh and more permanent arrangements, but, at the outset, he appealed to each colliery owner not to commit himself for more than twelve months.

He claimed that the adoption of his scheme should avoid everything of an inquisitorial nature into the profits, prices, and customers of an individual colliery, and leave every company free to manage its business in its own way ; and that it should give full scope to the development of the coalfield and the district generally, provided that such develop-

ment would not be made at the expense of the owners and workmen employed in the staple industry. What he was endeavouring to find was, not a scheme to secure exorbitant profits to the shareholders, or excessive wages to the workmen employed in colliery undertakings, but some arrangement whereby, if possible, undue competition might be terminated, a reasonable return obtained on the capital that had been sunk, and fair wages secured to the colliery operatives of South Wales.

CHAPTER VIII

HIS SCHEME

“THE South Wales and Monmouthshire Steam Coal Owners, having ascertained their present outputs and the proportion or percentage of each Company’s output to the total production embraced in the combination, shall agree for some fixed period (say twelve months) that each undertaking is entitled to produce, month by month, an agreed percentage of the total production of the month, whatever it may prove to be ; and they shall further enter into a binding agreement that any Company exceeding its percentage quantity shall contribute a fixed amount on every ton of such excess as liquidated damages towards indemnifying those who produce short of their percentage quantities.

It will be observed that the questions of prices and profits are in no way touched upon ; that no attempt is made to fix a minimum selling price ; to classify the various qualities of coal ; or to dictate to the seller the price he should ask for his commodity. He is left perfectly free to manage his business as he thinks best. Nor, on the other hand, is any attempt made to fix a maximum output. The production in any month is not a fixed one. It will rise or fall automatically, and will vary ac-

according to the demand. The only thing is the relative proportion which the respective undertakings are to supply of the total production. This aggregate supply is left an open one, and will largely depend from time to time upon the demand, i.e. a demand at prices which leave a fair margin of profit. No particulars relating to their business will be required from the parties to the agreement beyond the amount of coal sent away from their collieries, and this in any case would be pretty accurately known.

“Now, how would such a system operate in practice to prevent underselling? Let us assume for the moment that there is no difficulty in a pretty close estimate being arrived at by a sale agent of the quantity he is entitled to dispose of in a particular month. Let us further assume that he has disposed of that quantity, but that his Company could produce more if the agreement permitted him to sell it. Hitherto he would have had no hesitation in selling a further quantity, although the price was unremunerative. Hitherto he has been urged by his Board of Directors, backed by appeals from the manager, to keep the colliery going with plenty of empties, so that the output might be increased, and cost of production kept down. His competitors in business are in the same position. It is a case of “devil take the hindmost,” the result being that with the view of saving a penny or two in the cost, 3d., 6d., or even more is sacrificed in price; but inasmuch as all are making similar efforts, the total quantity of coal sold is very much the same and the general cost is not reduced.

“The agent who has been instrumental in bringing down the price has secured a very temporary advantage as regards output, while next month he will find the price of all his current sales reduced, and that some competitor has gone one better in depriving him of the increased output temporarily secured in the previous month. That is how it has been up to the present, but under my proposal a new and deterrent influence is introduced. The agent and his Board of Directors will not have to consider whether the reduction in the cost of production obtained by increasing the output beyond their proportional quantity or quantum will cover the compensation they must pay for such excess quantity.

“For illustration, let us suppose that at a selling price of 10s. per ton a colliery can just make both ends meet, and that the agent has estimated his quantum for the month to be twenty thousand tons. Let us further assume the compensation to be paid to be fixed at 2s. 6d. per ton. He has placed his quantum, and is asked to quote a price for a thousand tons of coal to be delivered in the same month. Before he does so he must consider at what price he can afford to sell without obviously making a loss. He may argue that the extra thousand can be produced at considerably less cost than the first twenty thousand tons. The standing charges, cost of maintaining roadways, etc., will be the same on twenty-one thousand as on the twenty thousand. The coal will be reduced, perhaps, a penny a ton over the whole twenty-one thousand tons, or, in other words, instead of costing his company 10s.

per ton to produce the extra thousand tons, as it has done the other twenty thousand, there will be a saving of twenty-one pence or 1s. 9d. per ton in the cost of producing the additional quantity.

“But then he will have to pay 2s. 6d. per ton penalty. Consequently he will lose money if he sells at less than 10s. 9d., and he will probably not think it worth his while to quote less than 11s., and he will stand firm at that. If two or more are competing for the same business, those who fail to secure the order will have the satisfaction of knowing that one thousand tons will increase the general production, and that all who are below their quantum will participate in the 2s. 6d. compensation, that the successful competitor will have to pay.

“It will be noted that the total of the ‘deficits’ will always equal the total ‘excesses’; that is to say, for every ton that any colliery produces over its agreed percentage of the total, some other colliery must be a ton ‘short.’ The ‘excess’ and the ‘shorts’ must, of necessity, balance one another.

“It may be objected that though an agent knows his fixed percentage of the total, that total varies, therefore he does not know his quantum until the figures are made up after the close of the month, and consequently an element of doubt and speculation is introduced. But when one considers the regularity of the total output as indicated by the monthly shipments and the number of days worked, this objection will be seen to have little weight. A competent agent on the spot, so to speak, carefully watching the shipments week by week, will be able to arrive at an estimate within a very small per-

centage of the exact total. If the element of uncertainty makes him the more careful not to exceed his quantum, no harm will be done. I had almost said so much the better ; it will strengthen him in holding out for a price which will cover the penalty, should he incur it, and bring the influence of the scheme more speedily and largely to bear upon prices. But if there be really anything in this objection, it might be lessened to some extent by issuing early in every week a statement giving the total of the previous week's production. In the possible modifications considered later, this objection will be dealt with again and a complete remedy suggested.

“A vital point to be determined is the compensation to be paid per ton. Upon this depends the success or failure of the whole scheme. In the Westphalian scheme a fine of 50s. per ton is imposed for any breach in not passing on orders received by individual firms to the Syndicate. But that is intended to be prohibitive. The compensation to be paid under my scheme is not intended to be prohibitive, but only deterrent until prices reach a generally paying level. It must not, therefore, be placed too high. On the other hand, if it is placed too low, it will not act as a sufficient deterrent to underselling. The inducement to reduce cost by increasing output might act more strongly in the agent's mind than the penalty, and the system would have little or no effect.

“If some scheme, such as I have outlined, were adopted, my fear would be that it might be entirely spoiled by placing the penalty too low. Under the

"Limitation of the Vend," the penalty varied from 3s. to 5s. per Newcastle chaldron, or from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 10d. per ton. But the circumstances of cost of production are very different in South Wales from those which subsist in the North. With us the fixed charges, or items of cost, other than those (such as that of coal cutting) which depend upon the number of tons produced, bear a much higher percentage of the total cost than they do in the North. Consequently, variations in the total quantity produced at any colliery affect the cost per ton far more than they do in Northumberland or Durham.

"In the illustration given a little time back as to how the penalty would influence the mind of a sale agent in deciding what price to quote for any excess beyond his quantum, the penalty was assumed to be 2s. 6d. per ton, and I do not think it should be fixed at anything less. It might be thought at first that a less penalty would be a sufficient deterrent. But if in the illustration given, the penalty were only one shilling, the agent might be tempted to sell an increased quantity at the unremunerative price of 10s., for he would argue that the reduced cost of his extra quantity was 1s. 9d., while the penalty only came to one shilling.

"Again, supposing that instead of only making "both ends meet," a colliery was earning a shilling a ton profit at the price of 10s., then the reduced cost, together with the profit on the extra quantity, would come to 2s. 9d., or 3d. more than the penalty, so that to such a colliery 2s. 9d. would not be an absolute deterrent. From 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per ton would, however, I believe, be found a sufficient

penalty to produce the result we aim at, namely, the prevention of underselling without danger of driving prices up to an unjustifiable or extravagant level.

“And let me draw special attention to this very valuable feature of the system. If the penalty is a fixed one, as I would propose, it is most effective when prices are low, and becomes less and less so as prices advance; and when prices have reached a high level, and it is not needed, it practically ceases to operate at all. Take, for example, the colliery just making “both ends meet,” at a price of 10s. per ton, the penalty being fixed at 2s. 6d. per ton, and suppose that the half of any increased selling price over 10s. was secured as profit, the other half going in increased cost of production through advanced wages, etc. Then though at 10s. (on the assumptions made) such a colliery would lose 9d. a ton on the extra one thousand sold; at 12s. it would make 3d. profit on the extra quantity even after paying the penalty; while at 14s. it would make 1s. 3d. profit. Thus the deterrent influence of the fixed penalty becomes less and less as prices advance, and this is as it should be. Even if through the miscalculation of their agent, a colliery firm had to pay in any month compensation to the extent of a hundred pounds or so, they would have little cause to grumble if the operation of the scheme was to advance prices a shilling or two over their whole quantity.

“All expenses incidental to the working of the scheme should be met by a small levy. This need not exceed $\frac{1}{16}$ of a penny per ton at the outside, and should be kept entirely distinct from the compensation fund.

"Some little difficulty might be experienced at the outset in agreeing the respective outputs, especially in the case of companies which expected shortly to increase their production, but if the matter is approached in a conciliatory spirit and with a real desire to give the scheme a fair trial, that difficulty will be readily overcome. It was overcome year after year under the "Limitation of the Vend." Producers about to increase their outputs must consider whether it would not be better to secure 2s. a ton advance on their present quantity than 6d. or 1s. reduction over a larger output. As a general principle upon which to arrive at the present production every Company might be allowed to select as its basis the output in any period of six consecutive months during the past two years, while special circumstances might be dealt with in the case of any undertaking by a Committee of the whole members of the combination, voting according to their respective outputs. Information as to the outputs of the collieries in the Coal-owners' Association, is already in the hands of that body, and this would much facilitate matters upon this point. That is the proposal in its simplest form.

"And, now, let me consider some of the modifications which may be made to it. Every company might name a price from time to time below which it would undertake not to sell, and at the commencement of every month the total quantity to be sold and the quantum of each colliery might be fixed, instead of leaving these quantities indeterminate. That was the system adopted in the "Limitation of the Vend," but, for reasons already given, I hold

strongly that it is not desirable to put a fixed limit to prices or quantities. At the same time, good might result from a friendly interchange of opinion on prices at the meetings of the committee.

“If the element of uncertainty (small as it would be) as to the quantity that any colliery would be entitled to dispose of in any month be held to be a serious objection, it might be desirable to fix a maximum quantity, up to which a colliery might go without incurring any penalty. This maximum might be fixed generally, say at 90 per cent of the present output, or it might be varied from month to month by the committee, or a sliding scale of penalties might be adopted, a certain fixed quantity might be free, while a sliding scale penalty might attach to any excess over a quantum arrived at from a fixed percentage of the variable total when the quantum exceeded the free limit.

“For example, up to a certain quantity, a colliery might be free to sell without incurring any liability, but for every excess over such fixed quantity it might become liable to 6d. per ton on the first 1 per cent, one shilling on the second 1 per cent, and so on. It will be seen there are many modifications of the simple scheme. But, under such modifications, the excess quantities would not necessarily balance the deficit, though they might be arranged so to do, but, if not, the total penalty on the “excesses” would have to be divided rateably among the “shorts.”

“It might be thought desirable to fix maximum and minimum quantities for each undertaking, leaving it free to work within the assigned limits,

and only paying or receiving when such limits were overstepped.

“The minimum might also be the maximum up to which a colliery should be free to sell without incurring the penalty, and the maximum and minimum might be fixed generally, or might be varied by the committee from month to month, according to the outlook of the market.

“In any case a minimum should be fixed for every company, the production falling short of which no compensation shall be paid on any deficit below such minimum.

“Another modification to meet foreign competition at points where that competition might be regarded as active or acute readily suggests itself. It will be remembered that the “Limitation of the Vend” was confined to London and coastwise shipments; and this, according to Mr. Porter, in his *Progress of the Nation*, led to north country Colliery Owners exporting coal abroad at prices “giving the preference to the foreign buyer of 40 per cent in the cost of English coal.” In fact, as Mr. Porter points out, foreigners obtained their supplies cheap at the expense of the home consumer. At the present time the Westphalian Syndicate, while keeping up its prices to consumers in its immediate locality, is said to be endeavouring to hold and expand its markets outside by offering coal at less than cost price, and its Articles of Association provide for giving compensation out of the general funds to those whose coal is sold.

“Though at the outset I think it would be best not to complicate the scheme with any exceptions, it

might, when it was fairly in working order, be desirable to make special exemption in the case of coal shipments to markets where it was found the competition of coal produced elsewhere was making headway, and to which our shipments were falling away. For instance, if it were found that American coal was ousting us from the West Indies, or Tyne coal from the Baltic, and that our shipments to those markets were falling away, it would not be difficult to exclude shipments to those markets from the quantum of any colliery so shipping or to reckon them at a half or some other fraction of the quantity so shipped. It would be necessary under such circumstances, and perhaps it would be desirable in any case, to establish a statistical department whose function it would be to watch closely and report the shipments month by month to every foreign port.

“It has already been pointed out to me that some collieries whose practice it is to contract forward for a very large proportion of their output, might be required to supply the full contract quantities in a particular month, and would be prejudiced under the scheme in the following month when their contractors wished the deficiency to be made up. This objection might be met by taking the operative period of the system three-monthly, instead of monthly, and so averaging ; but I do not think it would be desirable to extend the period for which the quantum were arranged and over which the penalty became payable beyond three months.

“In regard to fresh undertakings and the stimulus to sink new pits which it has been suggested the scheme would offer, I would say that to some the

cheap cost of labour now ruling is an inducement to embark in colliery enterprise, while to those of the opposite turn of mind higher prices will always be an inducement to influence fresh capital, however they may be brought about, and we shall be faced with that danger when any rise in prices takes place. It might be arranged, too, that when the average price under the sliding scale reached 12s., the penalty for the time should cease and the market be left to free competition. When the prices dropped below 12s., the penalty would again come into force.

“But there will be less danger arising from a large influx of new undertakings on a rise brought about by any combination, than under ordinary conditions, for it will be felt that such a rise has been brought about by artificial means and may collapse before new undertakings can be completed. Moreover, I only ask a year’s trial at the outset for the scheme, whereas a colliery of importance now commenced would take several years to develop any considerable output, and, further, it must not be forgotten that the South Wales coalfield is rapidly being occupied, the whole of the Merthyr, Aberdare and Rhondda have been taken up, and not a great deal of acreage north of the anticlinal remains unoccupied. Steam collieries to the south of the anticlinal will be costly and risky undertakings requiring a very large expenditure of capital and many years to develop.”

We have omitted the algebraic symbols which Lord Rhondda incidentally employed to show that the “excesses” and the “shorts” must, of necessity, balance one another. They are highly technical and

very complicated. Their omission in no way affects his main argument, or the completeness of his treatment. The scheme was drawn up eight years after he had left Cambridge. It was submitted for the consideration of employers and employed before he had become a member of the Coal-owners' Association, and before the storm of industrial controversy, in which he played so prominent a part, had arisen.

It is open to those who may take a narrow view of the scheme, or who may be prejudiced by the fact that it emanated from an employer of labour, to say that the only problem Viscount Rhondda set himself to consider was, how to manipulate the coal trade so as to obtain a monopoly of prices, and that he shows no thought of the national effect, or of the political aspect, or of the ethical aspect. But no criticism can be fair or just which does not take into consideration the fact that his sole object was to investigate the causes of depression in the coal industry of South Wales, and to discover how far and in what respect the depression was due to an excess of supply ; to undue competition among producers, and to underselling ; and whether these evils could be checked or remedied by a scheme of combination. A project that had as one of its main objects the securing of a reasonable return to the employer for the capital he had invested, and fair wages to the employé for his labour, cannot be said to have no thought of the community, or of the national aspect, or of the ethical aspect. Having such an objective in view, its moral justification is established, whatever its imperfections, and whatever difference of opinion may exist as to its soundness or practicability.

CHAPTER IX

HIS POLITICAL CAREER

IN making a comparison between the Wales of the present and the Wales of the "eighties" and "nineties," two facts must be borne in mind. The first is the laying of the foundation of the mining industry in South Wales and the expansion of production, which increased at a greater rate during the business life of Viscount Rhondda than it had done in any previous period, and the growing discontent of the different classes of workmen with regard to the apportionment of the wealth accumulated by the captains of industry. The second is, the rise of the national spirit and its political expression. There was a time when political feeling was well-nigh unknown in Wales, when reformers were few in number and considered by many a danger to the community. Those were the days when the direction of public affairs, the appointment of magistrates and State officials, and the control of the politics of the country, were entirely in the hands of the Whigs and the nobility.

Although two centuries had elapsed since the foundation of Welsh Nonconformity, there was not for Wales, between the years 1852 and 1868, a single Nonconformist Representative in Parlia-

ment ; but with the Reform Bill of 1867 there came a change ; the voice of Wales was heard and her claims considered for the first time. The pioneer of Welsh Nationalism was Henry Richard, who, as Lord Aberdare once observed, " by his earnestness, his knowledge and his eloquence, raised the Welsh question into a higher plane and gave it a position of greater importance." It was through his instrumentality that Wales first gained a respectful hearing in Parliament, and men in high places were induced to pay serious attention to the needs and claims of the Principality.

Legislatively, the effects of enfranchisement on Wales have been few. Two Acts have been passed which may be called purely Welsh Acts ; the Sunday Closing Act and the Welsh Intermediate Education Act. The effects are seen in the nation itself rather than in the legislation which has been passed for its benefit. The election of 1868 signaled the rise of new political forces on a national scale, which meant the transference of political power into the hands of the people at large. Politics came into education and education into politics ; ever since they have been inseparable. Efforts at reform, which in previous generations were spasmodic and individualistic, now assumed a collective and organized form. The men who did the spade work had no political machinery for the execution of their political ambitions, there were no emoluments and no party rewards as an incentive to work.

The extension of the suffrage is good on the whole, for the reason that it sustains and carries forward the nation by the efforts, the ambition, and the in-

telligence of the people in the mass. But it is not good when this power is conferred prematurely ; that is, before the people have learned to co-ordinate their lives, and before they have acquired that public virtue and spirit which is a necessary preparation for the exercise of that power. This power, through the extension of the suffrage, came to the Welsh peasantry none too soon, and by the Welsh peasantry we mean the artisan, the farmer, and the great middle class.

One of the reasons why the conferring of this new power, the inauguration of this new civil policy, was not accompanied by any violence was, that there had been at the bottom of Welsh Society a real growth of self-respect, intelligence and loyalty to constituted authority ; there had been anticipatory adaptations, partly conscious and partly unconscious, to a new and higher environment. The people had not been free on the side of politics, nor entirely on the side of religion ; but the effect of the enfranchisement was to give the people a feeling of common interest in the welfare of their country ; it brought unity and stability in unity, and gave a new impetus to the moral energies of the nation. It led to the spread of intelligence and of knowledge. By knowledge is meant that which a man knows, by intelligence that which knows it. Knowledge bears the same relation to intelligence which invested wealth bears to the spirit of enterprise by which wealth is created. This new power intensified the spirit of patriotism in the nation, and gave it a prospective colouring. It cultivated the discussive element which is a great element of civilization,

and educated the people in the law of true democratic life.

It gave rise to a spontaneous and general desire for educational advantages for sons of the soil, for a higher form of national culture, which has culminated in the formation of a Welsh University with three constituent colleges. So that Wales, which was at one time to all intents and purposes what Metternich had called Italy, "a geographical expression," and as such an object of indifference to some and contempt to others, has at last recovered consciousness, and is receiving that measure of respect which is due to her.

We feel, however, constrained to emphasize the fact that the psychological, ethical and mental, adaptation of the Welsh nation to this new and higher environment created by the new system of civil policy, of legislation and of partial self-government, which resulted through the Reform Bill of 1867, was due mainly to the influence of the Welsh pulpit, which gave a *set* to the nation's character and contributed to the unfolding of intelligence among the common people, and to a more general awakening of their higher feelings. Indeed, it is in the Welsh pulpit of the past that we find the source of the vital regenerative forces that have made Wales, spiritually, intellectually, and politically, a nation to be reckoned with. Much as the Welsh people are indebted to some of their political leaders of the present and immediate past, they should not forget, neither should these politicians forget, their obligations to the historical past.

Viscount Rhondda did not forget. Yet, he never

affected an abnormal interest in religion in order to appear religious, or to advance his own popularity in a religious community. He was not a tricky professional politician. If he had been he would have had an office under the Crown, or some position in the political life of the country which his great talents merited. The professional politician is a politician because it opens the way whereby he may benefit himself, and helps him to grind his own axe ; he may speak with seeming pride and eloquence of " this old and haughty nation proud in arms " ; or of " Owen Glyndwr and his comrades-in-arms " ; he may speak with fiery indignation of " Saxon usurpation and domination," with pathetic tenderness of the " superiority of the native language " ; yet all the time he is thinking only of himself and of the next election. Of the next generation, and of the effect of present legislation upon the fortunes of that generation, he is utterly indifferent, because he is not a statesman, and because all his thoughts are centred in himself and his party.

When the electors of the Merthyr Boroughs returned Viscount Rhondda as their Member, they did not return a tricky politician or a demagogue, but a man who had an opinion and a will, who was the same in public duty as in private thinking.

It was in the month of February, 1888, that he formally decided upon a political career. He was before then a familiar personality in the Aberdare portion of the constituency, but he had made no figure in political movements up to that time. He had been a member of the Ystradyfodwg Local Board, to which he was elected by a large majority,

and that in spite of the fact that his opponent received the support of the Labour leaders, including Mr. W. Abraham, M.P., known throughout Wales as "Mabon."

When Mr. C. H. James, then the colleague of Mr. Henry Richard, as Member for the Merthyr Boroughs, announced in February, 1888, his intention of resigning his seat, there was no scarcity of suitors for the position; the most prominent being Mr. G. W. Russell, now the Rt. Hon. G. W. Russell; Mr. J. Carvell Williams who had been for some years the secretary of the movement for procuring the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church, and Viscount Rhondda, then known as Mr. D. A. Thomas.

The contest was really between Mr. G. W. Russell and Viscount Rhondda; but, unfortunately for Mr. Russell he had a strong and pronounced antagonist in the Rev. Sonley Johnstone, then the Editor of *The South Wales Daily News*, who had considerable influence in the Borough of Merthyr, chiefly for the reason that he had held the pastorate of Market Square Congregational Church, Merthyr. His grievance was that Mr. Russell had fallen short of Liberal expectations on many important questions, especially on the Disestablishment question. One can easily imagine the effect of this in such a stronghold of Nonconformity as Merthyr.

A final meeting of the Liberal Association was held at Bethel Chapel, Abernant, on the 3rd of March, under the Presidency of Mr. Thomas Williams, J.P., of Gwaelodygarth, a prominent Congregationalist and a strong supporter of the Disestablishment

movement. In the voting Mr. Carvell Williams received 12 votes, Mr. G. W. Russell 28, and Mr. D. A. Thomas 76. The meeting declined to entertain the proposal that a final vote should be taken between Mr. D. A. Thomas and Mr. G. W. Russell, on the ground that the former had received an absolute and decisive majority of votes, with the result that a unanimous vote was given for Mr. D. A. Thomas, who issued his address to the electors on the 7th of March. On the 14th, the day of nomination, he was declared elected, no other candidate being nominated.

It is noticeable that while his first address to the electors was quite equal to Liberal expectations, there was no touch of the demagogue in it ; neither do we find in any of the public speeches which he delivered during his political career, such expressions as " the terrorism of the Welsh aristocracy " ; " working men in Wales are starving " ; " the Tory party is the party of Christmas doles " ; " the iron oppression to which Welsh Nonconformists have been subjected for generations " ; " the Welsh aristocracy are feeding their game with the food which the people need," etc.

Viscount Rhondda was at heart a reformer, but not of the violent kind. He believed in the removal of grievances and in national progress, but on sane and orderly lines. He believed in the recognition of the separate national entity of Wales, on the principle that all the component parts of the Empire should be encouraged to develop their more distinctive qualities. But the idea of accentuating racial distinctions, merely for the sake of distinction,

never appealed to him, and at no time did he countenance any policy or movement which would be a menace to Imperial unity.

If he differed from some of his contemporaries in the attitude he assumed on the question of Welsh Nationalism, it was in his conception of what constituted Nationalism, of the particular form which Welsh Nationalism should take, and of the particular methods that should be adopted in order to secure for Wales her legitimate rights. He had no sympathy with the negative side of Nationalism which represents the isolation of one nation from another, but rather with the policy of welding together the different parts in a bond of mutual toleration and helpfulness.

The idea of the destinies of a nation, particularly of the smaller nations, as something whose guidance was a proper object to ambition to every individual citizen was an idea that he encouraged and cultivated ; but he was no hot enthusiast, and he was as far removed from the demagogue as any Welsh politician of his day. He had the wisdom as well as the earnestness that looks upon life practically.

Curious and varied are the motives that induce men to seek Parliamentary honours. What were the motives that actuated Viscount Rhondda ? We believe we are on safe ground when we say that he did not seek a seat in the House of Commons because he desired patronage or emoluments, but because he honestly thought that he, being a business man who understood the intricacies of the coal trade upon which the prosperity of the district so largely depended, could render it real service, as well as

in the House of Commons. This does not mean that he had no ambitions, in fact we have sufficient evidence to show that he sincerely entertained, at the very outset of his political life, the idea of one day being a Cabinet Minister.

As we have indicated in another part of this work, when Viscount Rhondda took his seat in the House of Commons, the Welsh national spirit was more active and aggressive, and even more turbulent than it had been for many generations, or than it has been since. This spirit found its expression about this particular period in the anti-tithe movement, which is one of the sad blots in the political renaissance of Wales. Viscount Rhondda was undoubtedly a strong supporter of Land Reform and of the movement for disestablishing and disendowing the Church in Wales, but we know of no evidence that he, any more than any other reasonable patriot, condoned the outrages which were committed at that time, or that he agreed that the violence and bloodshed were the direct results of "provocative acts by imported police supplemented by the antagonism created through the requisitioning of unnecessary soldiery." This is a false interpretation of those proceedings.

As far as we can gather, Viscount Rhondda believed that the same principle was involved in the payment of tithes as in the payment of Church Rates, the agitation against which had ceased with their abolition in 1869, and that he fully appreciated the convictions of those who refused to pay tithes even in an indirect way. But it seems to us that he looked at all questions affecting the land and the

agricultural community from an economic point of view—not from the point of view of the farmer or of the Nonconformist exclusively. While he subscribed to the theory that the tithes were “national property diverted to sectarian purposes” and should be restored to their “original purpose,” he was, like his father, a firm believer in social law and order. And while he believed in the removal of anti-democratic forces, partly because they were in a great measure anti-national, he did not believe in seeking the amelioration of social or economic conditions by resorting to violent means. “The victory of lawlessness,” says Frederick Robertson of Brighton, “with the memory of past wrongs to avenge is almost more sanguinary than the victory of those who have had power long and whose power has been defied.” This was exemplified in the tithe agitation.

As may be seen in our treatment of Viscount Rhondda’s business life, he knew something about the battle of Rights against Rights, that is the collision between the Rights of Labour and the Rights of Capital, or of Property and Wealth. Even among some extreme Socialists there was a feeling that amounted to a conviction that he was a just man ; and an impartial survey of his business life forces us to the conclusion that he tried to the best of his ability and opportunity to make an atonement between the Rights of Labour and the Rights of Capital. But he never once bowed the knee to lawlessness, or condoned the violation of contracts and agreements. He sought to elevate, not to lower, the standard of industrial morality by enforcing

discipline, and by combating the action of extremists who had real pleasure in plunging the community into the throes of civil anarchy.

Yet, this iconoclast, who took a straight and an independent course with his employés and electors, who fought Socialism and Syndicalism as no other man had done, who was alternately the object of suspicion and admiration, who, because he upheld and sought to raise the standard of industrial morality, was himself judged by a higher and more severe standard, who dared, and was allowed, to say to the working man what no Minister of the Crown and no Government would dare or would be allowed to say—held what was practically an impregnable political position, as testified by the polls at every contest which took place between the year of his election in 1888 and 1909, the year of the dissolution of Parliament in December, after the Lords had thrown out the Budget in order to force a new election.

When in 1906 Mr. Henry Radcliff, another coal magnate, sought to oust Mr. Keir Hardie as the Union Member for Merthyr, and almost succeeded in his effort, Viscount Rhondda made his highest poll, 13,971 against 8000 given for Mr. Keir Hardie, and 7776 given for Mr. Radcliff ; and when in, 1909, he yielded to the representation of the Liberal party in Cardiff to give up his safe seat at Merthyr in order to contest Cardiff, he was returned by the highest majority ever recorded in favour of any candidate for the constituency.

What is the explanation ? Is it in the force of Liberal principles ? No ! True, the fact that he

was a Liberal meant a great deal when he was nominated, but as time went on, Liberalism was lost in the personality of "D. A." The explanation is to be found partly in the fact that the Welsh miners, as well as working men in general, whatever may be their faults, admire honesty, frankness, chivalry and independence of mind—the qualities that distinguished Viscount Rhondda. It is to be found partly in the fact that his power was not altogether derived from his wealth or social position, or from the vast enterprises in which he was interested, but from his personal influence. The greatness of every individual is in his influence—not in his learning or position, or even public service. "Men of real character in a progressive nation," as Hugh Taylor says, "have never regarded wealth as a means of self-indulgence, but as a means for political power." That Viscount Rhondda was a man of real character in this sense cannot be successfully disputed, and the measure of power which he acquired, he sought to use, and did use when the opportunity came to him, for service—not for self-indulgence.

Great and enthusiastic as were the demonstrations which followed the election time after time of Mr. Henry Richard, and Mr. Richard Fothergill, they did not equal those which followed the election of Viscount Rhondda, or D. A., as he was affectionately called. No victor could possibly be acclaimed with greater cordiality. On the lips of the thousands who formed the processions, and of the thousands who lined the streets of Aberdare and Merthyr, there was but one expression. "Here is our man." Flaming

torches converted the night into day, in the light of which, as the Rev. D. Silyn Evans, Aberdare, humorously observed in *Y Tyst*, "the cocks crew out of time, the sheep called to each other to graze because it was day, the dogs barked in surprise and astonishment, and the crowds sang with great gusto :

D. A. Thomas, we declare
Gold and silver he shall wear ;
In his carriage he shall ride,
Prichard Morgan by his side.
Hurrah for D. A. Thomas,
He'll make a grand M.P.

Upon the death of Mr. Henry Richard, which took place on August 21st, 1888, the seat which he had filled was contested by Mr. Richard Foulkes Griffiths, B.A., a barrister, as the candidate of the Liberal Association, and Mr. William Prichard Morgan as an Independent Liberal, "D. A.," being loyal to the Association, unwisely supported the official candidate ; but Mr. Foulkes Griffiths was badly beaten, partly for the reason that Mr. Prichard Morgan received the votes of the Conservatives in order, as they confessed, to "smash the Caucus."

How "D. A." had infected his admirers and supporters may be gathered from the following popular election song which was composed by the late Mr. Thomas Howells, Aberaman, known in Welsh circles as "Hywel Cynon" (born 1839). As a musician, adjudicator and choir-leader, he was quite a celebrity in his day, and his services were in great demand.

D. A. THOMAS, ESQ., M.P., YSGUBORWEN

In the Election of July 6th, 1892

BY HYWEL CYNON

Welsh air : "Forth to the Battle"

Sound the silver trumpets, ring the golden bells,
Let the valleys echo "'Sguborwen excels"—
Excels, excels in honours, "*Excelsior*" is the cry
Of Aberdare and Merthyr, their voices rend the sky ;
Torches flashing in the gloom of night,
Cannons loudly roaring the vict'ry of the fight ;
Sons of Cambria, come all hand in hand,
Send the Liberal chorus like wildfire o'er the land.

True and honour'd patriot, son of Gwalia Wen,
Your name is now distinguish'd among the names of men,
Sons of toil and labour in one united band
Sing you Liberal praises all o'er our dear old land ;
Bold and brave your honour'd life may be,
Let "Old Cymru" know that you are her M.P.—
Sons of Cambria, come all hand in hand,
Send the Liberal chorus like wildfire o'er the land.

True and honour'd patriot, O may your life be long,
In the cause of justice, O may your arm be strong ;
Listen to the voices of warriors brave and bold,
Caradog and Llewelyn, the gallant men of old ;
Follow, follow, do all the good you can,
And never turn your back on the "Grand Old Man."
Sons of Cambria, come all hand in hand,
Send the Liberal chorus like wildfire o'er the land.

Let the "Liberal Party" in Parliament unite,
An army when divided can never win a fight,
The rotten "Paper Union" in fragments must be torn,
The Tory army conquer'd—the tyrants all forlorn :
Celtic hearts in friendship must be bound,
Gladstonian feats with vict'ry will be crowned ;
Onward, onward ! do all the good you can,
And never turn your back on the "Grand Old Man."

That all classes supported his candidature for Merthyr Boroughs there can be no shadow of doubt, and that for several reasons. He was a young man of culture and great promise ; he was descended from a well-known stock, there was a far-sightedness in his very look, and he had a commanding personality. He was as engaging as he was unassuming while canvassing the people for their votes ; and his fascinating youth paired well with the white hair and advanced years of Mr. Henry Richard.

True, he was tauntingly reminded by some, during his canvassing tour in 1888, of his action during the election in March, 1880 ; he had just then left Cambridge. Mr. W. T. Lewis of the Maerdy (the late Lord Merthyr) stood as an " Independent " Candidate for the Merthyr Boroughs. At one of the election meetings held in the Market Hall, Aberdare, when Mr. Lewis addressed the electors, there was some disturbance owing to the attitude of some of the supporters of Mr. Henry Richard, who made disagreeable noises while Mr. Lewis was speaking. The chairman, having lost his patience, suggested that the disturbers should be removed, whereupon " D. A." got up and invited a few stalwarts to follow him, with the result that the disturbers beat a hasty retreat. " D. A." was at that time, politically, a Conservative, and on the side of the coal magnate whom, in later years, he overpowered—especially during the great strikes of 1898 and 1911—by his strong independent action in keeping his own collieries going.

It is interesting to observe that during the whole of his Parliamentary life, " D. A." never brought a

good speaker with him when addressing the electors. He was once asked why he persisted in bringing with him Lord Pontypridd (then known as Mr. Alfred Thomas, M.P.), and why he always put him to speak first. "D. A." replied, that it was a "foil," knowing that the audience would be bored by Mr. Alfred Thomas—on account of his poor delivery—and would be glad of a change. It was, as he said, the "jam after the powder," though "D. A." could not pride himself on his own oratorical achievements; but to have a poor speaker before him, he thought, would set his own speech off to better advantage.

"D. A." was very adroit. When he attended a meeting of his constituents at Aberdare when the Temperance and Education Questions were under discussion, he quietly arranged to leave Aberdare for Cardiff at a certain time, for the reason that he did not want to commit himself on the Education Bill. When he got up to speak, he said that as he had only twenty minutes at his disposal, he would have to confine himself to the Temperance Question, in which he was sympathetically interested, and he left the meeting without enlightening the people as to his real attitude towards the Education Bill, though the ruse had been discovered before the meeting commenced, and there was some controversy in the Press, regarding the incident. "D. A." was once announced to address a meeting, and in response to a request from the reporters of some of the South Wales papers, he gave a copy of his speech in advance. He did not, however, put in an appearance at the meeting, but his intended address

appeared in the morning papers as if he had delivered it.

Respecting what we have said about his independence, we may add that it was both an excellence and a defect in him. That it was a permanent element in his character is shown in his Parliamentary career. There are odd men of special ideas who find it difficult to fit in anywhere, because they depreciate the merit of others, and consider their own merits beyond anything that may come to them as a reward. There are also men who are temperamentally destined for membership in a small circle. Viscount Rhondda had friends and powerful ones ; and, as we have already said, he had the genius for friendship. But he seemed to have no desire to go out with the multitude to do either good or evil ; such was the singularity, and, seemingly, his love of singularity, which almost amounted to perversity. Indeed, he prided himself on his aloofness, and he appeared to find satisfaction in some ideal or ideals of his own, and in the consciousness of the difference between himself and others. But it is a remarkable fact that this singular and independent man, who persisted in looking at popular questions from the angle of his own observation, and in carrying out his policy in accordance with his own ideas and not according to the prescription of others, died a citizen of the civilized world.

If he had been less scrupulous and independent— if he had cast in his lot with office-seekers who, not having the courage of their own opinions or convictions, crouched quietly under the dominion of

the party system, he would probably have occupied a much more conspicuous place in Parliamentary history. But as things happened, it is truth to say that if he had been nothing else but a Member of Parliament, his life would not be worth writing. His temperament, training, and education, were not well adapted to party politics. He could not have created a party, neither would he have made a leader of a party, partly because of his temperament, and partly because he did not consider that politicians were made for Governments, or that it was the function of a Government to distort the minds of Members of Parliaments, and to convert them into mere machines. Even when he found that his independence was accounted to him for political unrighteousness, and that he might with advantage to himself make an atonement by adjusting his attitude to suit party exigencies, his spirit would not allow him to do so.

When he entered Parliament he was in entire sympathy with what may be called concisely "The Welsh Question," which means really a group of questions, including Temperance, Education, Disestablishment and Disendowment, Land Reform and other issues ; but his outlook was wider than that of the great majority of his Welsh colleagues in the House of Commons ; it embraced the larger interests of industry, finance and commerce, as well as those of domestic legislation. Not only was his outlook wider, but his loyalty to purely Welsh interests was greater and more disinterested than that of some of his colleagues, for he carried his convictions to the point of open opposition to the policy of official

Liberalism. It is one thing for a Welsh Liberal Member to criticise and obstruct a Conservative Government, it is quite another thing to criticise and obstruct a Liberal Government. By adopting the former attitude he wins the approval of his party and of his countrymen ; but by adopting the latter he incurs their displeasure. That, however, was a small matter in the estimation of Viscount Rhondda.

This is what he said at the annual meeting of the Free Church Council at Cardiff at the beginning of 1908 :

"I was out of the party for some years, but recently returned to it in the hope of making it more efficient than it was. But so far from being an efficient organization, it is not taken seriously by the Government, by the House of Commons, or by the Welsh Members who compose the party. During the last twelve months three matters of great national interest to Wales were brought forward by the Government ; but not on one of the three were the Welsh party even consulted, or asked to express an opinion. Religious equality has been a burning question in Wales for more than a generation : surely, therefore, the question of the appointment of the Church Commission was one which should be referred to the Welsh party ; but it was not consulted. The Members were not consulted on the question of the Welsh National Council of Education, or when the new Education Department was established in substitution for that. It was not a party in the real and true sense of the word. It was nothing but an integral part of the Liberal Party. I do not believe we shall ever get a Welsh Parliamentary Party composed of men to act independently as occasion might arise : we shall never get an independent party unless it is formed on the lines of the Irish Party or the Independent Labour Party ; but that we shall never get in the case of the Welsh Members. When the Government likes, it can always split up the Welsh Parliamentary Party. Let the people take my note of warning, and not rely on the Welsh Party, but upon themselves and their own strong arm."

These were not the extravagant utterances of a disappointed politician, but the considered judgment of a judicially minded man and a patriotic Welshman ; he was strong in the support of the great body of the Welsh nation as well as of men who occupied responsible positions outside Wales. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, the editor of *The British Weekly*, himself a man of sturdy parts, and a loyal friend of Wales, gave full and frank expression to the general feeling in the columns of *The British Weekly* for July 6th, 1907 :

“ Wales sent up for the first time an absolutely unanimous Liberal representation. Where is Wales to-day ? What change has come over the scene ? What has been done about education ? What is the position of the Welsh revolt ? What about Disestablishment ? Mr. Lloyd George is a supremely clever man, with a quite ecclesiastical turn for manoeuvre. He has done brilliantly in his department, but what has he done for Wales ? Well, he has given Wales the Welsh Commission, a boon which the Principality is deeply pondering. What was his action about a Welsh Council in the educational discussion ? Mr. Lloyd George is detained by mysterious providences from appearing at Nonconformist gatherings nowadays, but he will have to explain himself to the nation that has so trusted him. If Wales is satisfied, there is no more to say ; but is there no Welshman who believes that the present Government will take up Disestablishment ? Perhaps it may be thought, on reflection, that Mr. Lloyd George and the Government have nipped rather than gripped the Welsh problem.”

In the same connection Mr. (now Sir) Ellis Jones-Griffith, M.P., said :

“ It is abundantly clear that the Government have the power to proceed with Welsh Disestablishment if they wish. If they do not proceed with it in this Parliament, it will not be the power but the wish that will be at fault. It is said in

answer to our demands that the House of Lords blocks the way. But does it? The Government are to introduce Temperance and Education Bills next session; does the House of Lords block the way of these measures? If not, why should Welsh Disestablishment be the only measure in regard to which the House of Lords paralyzes all Parliamentary efforts? Irish measures, Scotch measures, Labour measures, are introduced in this Parliament; why should the Welsh question be the only one to be arrested by anticipatory fears of the Upper House?"

True, the Welsh Party then, as well as now, contained men of real ability, but as a party they have seldom counted for much in the House of Commons, or in their influence in the administrative affairs of the country at large, or in the cause of freedom in other lands. They have had a "Chairman" and a "Whip," but they have been only ornamental figure-heads; the Welsh Party has not been a party in the true sense of the term. Unlike the Scottish, the Welsh members have lacked cohesion, determination and organization. Instead of giving the lead to the Welsh people, they have often had to be prompted.

It was only when a certain small section of the Welsh Parliamentary Party, under the leadership of Mr. Lloyd George, revolted and took an independent course, that any very serious attention was paid to them by the Government, and a definite move was made in the direction of Disestablishment. Although Mr. Gladstone himself personally appealed for a smooth passage for the Clergy Discipline Bill, the Welsh "rebels" held the House at bay several nights, and caused the Government great anxiety.

It is worthy of note that the leaders of this

revolt subsequently achieved distinction. Mr. Thomas E. Ellis became Chief Liberal Whip in 1894 in Lord Rosebery's brief Administration; Mr. Lloyd George became President of the Board of Trade in 1905; the late Sir S. T. Evans was appointed President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Courts in 1910; and at the time of his death in September, 1918, held the Office of President of the Prize Court. Mr. D. A. Thomas, who was one of the "rebels" on this and other occasions, was the last to receive recognition by his elevation to the Peerage in 1916; that was twenty-eight years after his entry into Parliament, eleven years after the first appointment of Mr. Lloyd George, and six years after the first appointment of Sir S. T. Evans. But there is this difference. Whereas the three other appointments were purely political, the elevation of Mr. D. A. Thomas to the peerage was entirely apart from party politics; it was a reward for the most valuable services rendered to the Empire as a whole, through his mission to Canada and America.

Up to 1906, Mr. D. A. Thomas had attended more divisions than any other Liberal Member of Parliament. He had carefully studied the rules of the House of Commons, and had made himself familiar with the ways and methods of those who took an active part in public debates. He took great interest in the art of Parliamentary fencing, and he applied the knowledge which he acquired to some advantage in the interests of his own constituency. This was proved in the discussion over the Eight Hours, Bank to Bank, Private Bill, of which the late Sir

Charles Dilke was in charge, at the request of the English Miners' Federation, to which the Government had decided to give three days. Mr. D. A. Thomas's constituency was strongly against the Bill; he was, therefore, acting in concurrence with their views.

He favoured the principle of local option, and advocated an eight-hour day, not from bank to bank, but on much the same lines as those adopted in the case of the present Eight Hours Act of 1908. He did a good deal of skilful lobbying, and he blocked the measure with no less than twenty-five amendments, all of which, except one, were accepted by the Speaker as in order, but even that was put in proper form. Later he induced Mr. Herbert Gladstone to have the eight-hours day to commence from the bottom of the shaft, instead of from bank to bank. He was always in the skirmishing line, always asking questions and playing the part of an obstructionist.

He manifested the same independence of mind in dealing with his Welsh colleagues. He agreed with the policy of freeing Welsh Nationalism from English Liberal domination. In fact, he was one of the first to advocate it. But he came into collision with Mr. Lloyd George over the "Cymru Fydd" organization, which had for its object the formation of a Welsh Independent Party in Parliament, supported by a united Wales. This meant the repudiation of official Liberalism. The policy outlined was the substitution of a Cymru Fydd Association for the existing Liberal Associations of North and South Wales.

As is well known, this policy met with a determined opposition both in the North and in the South ; even the Welsh members themselves were far from being united. While the policy prevailed in North Wales it failed in the South, for the reason that Viscount Rhondda was opposed to it, and in this he had the support of the South Wales Federation. When the matter was fought out at Newport at the annual meeting of the Federation, Mr. Lloyd George was by a formal vote refused a hearing. It has been said that Viscount Rhondda's only objection was to the method of organization, not to the principle—that he did not think that one central authority for the North and South was practicable.

But the blunt truth is that Viscount Rhondda had a shrewd and a strong suspicion that Mr. Lloyd George was aiming at ascendancy in the control of the politics of Wales. Viscount Rhondda, however, was not the sort of man to take a second place, or to play "second fiddle," as it is commonly said, to Mr. Lloyd George, or to anyone else. It was for the same reason that the miners' leaders supported Viscount Rhondda at the Newport meeting. The result was that four provincial federations were established, centred in one National Council. But this compromise ended in failure, and the Cymru Fydd Societies which had been established throughout the Principality disappeared, and with them all hopes of an Independent Welsh Party. So that The "Cymru Fydd" movement, with its "Young Wales" M.P.'s., has, as it has been observed, accomplished its destiny in "a somewhat comical anti-climax." The estrangement between Mr. Lloyd

George and Viscount Rhondda, in consequence of these proceedings, lasted until the outbreak of the War. But Viscount Rhondda's magnanimity was shown when he responded to Mr. Lloyd George's earnest solicitation at Cardiff to come to his aid as Minister of Munitions. True, Viscount Rhondda was at first reluctant ; but he finally yielded ; and eventually proved one of the best friends that Mr. Lloyd George has had during the War.

There was another conflict between Viscount Rhondda and Mr. Lloyd George ; it was over the question of Educational Autonomy for Wales, which arose out of the Balfour Education Act of 1902. It is not necessary here to enter into a discussion of the provisions of this Act, except to say that Mr. Lloyd George led a movement in Wales against the levying of a rate by the local authorities in aid of the non-provided schools which were Church of England Schools, and in favour of full control of all schools supported from public funds, and the abolition of religious tests. He also inaugurated a campaign against the Education (Defaulting Authorities) Act, which invested the Board of Education with almost unlimited power, and which could be exercised without recourse to the law courts. Mr. Lloyd George was encouraged in his course of action by the fact that Mr. Balfour had, during the debates on the Act of 1902, given a promise of educational autonomy for Wales. But Viscount Rhondda was hostile to the policy of Mr. Lloyd George, and, as usual, proved uncompromising. This, combined with the opposition of Mr. Lloyd Morgan, now Judge Lloyd Morgan, and Professor D. E. Jones of

Carmarthen, led to the defection of the County of Carmarthen, which in the end proved fatal to the movement. Indeed, each time Mr. Lloyd George came into conflict with Viscount Rhondda, his plans were frustrated and his hopes shattered.

Another occasion when Viscount Rhondda came into collision with Mr. Lloyd George, was when the latter continued to claim to be a Welsh Nationalist Leader while a Member of the Cabinet, and to claim a right to attend meetings of the Welsh Parliamentary Party. Viscount Rhondda pointed out that the attitude of Mr. Lloyd George was inconsistent—as inconsistent as it would be for Parnell to become Secretary for Ireland and to remain Chairman of the Irish Party. Viscount Rhondda, and others who were of the same mind, resented Mr. Lloyd George's policy of trying to influence the deliberations of the Welsh Party, especially on the Disestablishment Question.

Mr. Lloyd George had started out in politics as an uncompromising Nationalist—the most complete embodiment of the ambitions of the younger generation of Welshmen embracing the feelings of Nationalism, the leader of a guerilla band, daily increasing in size and influence, waging war against almost every constituted custom and authority, and bearing the standard of an extremist. He even led three of his Parliamentary colleagues into open revolt against the Government. He objected to Mr. Thomas E. Ellis taking office under Lord Rosebery, and declined to receive further official “whips” from him.

But when he himself was taken into the Cabinet,

he at once changed the bed-rock of his own political life, and became a practical politician, urging his countrymen to be moderate, and attending meetings of the Welsh Party in order to induce them not to press the Disestablishment question unduly. He even became vituperative when the Welsh Members, as well as Welshmen in general, became suspicious of the intention of the Government. He threatened—it was a foolish and a useless threat—to put men like Viscount Rhondda in the guard-room, but Viscount Rhondda was consistent throughout, and he was keen enough to perceive that Mr. Lloyd George's efforts to persuade the Welsh Members not to take any action that would jeopardize the Government, gave substantial ground for suspicion as to his own motives. Thus it was that the degree of estrangement which had been created at Newport was widened and embittered.

It was claimed in the English Press at the time of Viscount Rhondda's death, that, if he had possessed the secret of demagogic oratory, he would have been a more successful politician than Mr. Lloyd George. On the advantages of oratory we need not dilate. But if Viscount Rhondda lacked the gift of eloquence and public persuasion, he possessed some things which were of greater and more permanent value; he possessed integrity of purpose, a clear head for business, accuracy and truthfulness, practical talents, unremitting diligence, simplicity of character, a great organizing faculty and power of sustaining perseverance; and an intimate knowledge of intricate questions of finance. A prominent American citizen who is now engaged in war work,

expressed his surprise to Viscount Rhondda when he was in America that he was not in the British Cabinet, but he said to Viscount Rhondda a short time before his death, "Now that I know what the Cabinet is like, I understand why you are not a member of it."

It has been stated that Viscount Rhondda did not receive any honorary position during his Parliamentary career, and that he was not appointed on any committee, for the reason that he was regarded as impracticable and entirely unable to take the political world as it was around him. True, he was not given a position in the Government to which his talents entitled him, this he resented. It was natural that he should, for the tendency to react, and to react with bitterness, upon any thwarting of hope—for he had hoped to be a Member of the Cabinet—is a part of the make-up of self. He was not made to be "a hewer of wood" or "a drawer of water" to any class of men, or to any government.

He was, however, made Chairman of the Committee of the London Electrical Supply; and Mr. Henry Cripps, elder brother of Lord Parmoor, head of the firm of Dyson and Co., told Mr. J. H. Thomas, Viscount Rhondda's elder brother, that he had shown marvellous skill, insight and ability, in his capacity as chairman of this particular committee.

It was due to Mr. Asquith that Viscount Rhondda did not receive a position in the Liberal Government of 1906. This appears all the more extraordinary in the light of the compliment which he paid him in the House of Commons on the day of his death. If Mr. Asquith had always entertained such a high

opinion of Viscount Rhondda's capabilities, it is very singular that he should not have availed himself of his services. The secret of it is that Viscount Rhondda was not a *persona grata* either with Mr. Asquith or with the politicians who manipulated the party machinery. He took the trouble to go down to Swansea after the Liberals were turned out of office, and stated in a public speech that the Liberals had not resigned in consequence of the controversy over Mr. Campbell Bannerman and ammunitions, but owing to "D. A.'s" conduct over Disestablishment.

"My own life," Viscount Rhondda was reported to have said during an interview shortly before his death, "is in one way a queer commentary on our political system. That's how I should regard it. When I came down from Cambridge, I not only had a great desire for politics, but I had a number of things I wanted to get done in politics. Moreover, I had the energy to get them done. For twenty-five years of my life I strove for these political ideals in the House of Commons. Nothing came of it. Men were promoted to office who did not seem to me, whatever their merits might have been, to have the same chance of serving the State as efficiently as I desired to serve it. I was passed over. I confess to a little bitterness. Oh, I don't mean anything tragic. I was disappointed; that was all. Very well, I retired from politics and gave myself up entirely to business, like men in America. I rather despised politics, or at any rate the conditions. And now, when I am getting on in years, I am suddenly called back. What a turn of the wheel! I had almost forgotten politics. Of course, I can't do now all the things I wanted to do; but still I hope to achieve something. I was glad to do work in Canada and the States for munitions. It was worth the experience in the *Lusitania*. This food business is interesting; at any rate it's difficult; and perhaps I can help to conquer the difficulty."

It is a lamentable reflection that a narrow party system should have kept a man of such consummate ability as an organizer and administrator, out of the sphere of statesmanship until the last few years of his life, and even then because it was forced by sheer necessity to fall back upon him in the hour of the nation's extremity. It is almost pathetic to think this great man felt constrained to give up his Cardiff seat in the very same year that he was elected, and retire from Parliamentary life, because his services were not wanted by the Government. The most important industrial community in Wales had always felt that he was a national asset, so had the citizens of the Metropolitan City of Wales, but the party politicians, and Mr. Asquith in particular, in whose hands were the destinies of the nation, practically said that they had no use for such a man, though in capacity for service he was the inferior of none of them.

He was painfully impressed by the fact that men who could not talk sensibly on industrial questions, and who had no understanding of the great economic problems that were forcing themselves upon the attention of the State, were given positions of honour and responsibility; that governments were invoking the aid of self-seeking lawyers, and giving them a remuneration which was out of proportion to the services they were rendering, while successful business men, who are the best example of well-applied toil and enterprise, were a negligible factor in British politics.

That there is truth in this, there cannot be any question. There is a growing conviction that the

legal element has had too paramount a voice in shaping the legislation of the country, especially having regard to the fact that England is a great commercial nation, that its population is becoming more and more industrial, that the rapid and widespread growth of industry has changed, and is changing, the character of the whole people, and consequently changing the character of the problems with which British statesmen have to deal. The State is interfering more and more in industrial affairs, and taking the employment of labour more and more into its own hands; and if the democratic programme of the day will be realized in the immediate future, it will interfere on a far wider and larger scale. Hence it is that Governments, whatever may be their political complexion, should utilize the services of men of the type of Viscount Rhondda, who had such a profound knowledge of the industrial problem in all its aspects, as well as of commerce, finance, credit and banking, and who under the greatest test to which a man could possibly be put, proved himself to be, not only a great business man, but a patriot and a humanitarian reformer.

CHAPTER X

HIS SERVICES TO THE STATE

WE now come to the crown and climax of Lord Rhondda's whole career, and there is evidence that he himself regarded it in that light. Here he stands like a plant in its high and palmy state; the supremacy of his organizing and administrative genius is now beyond question, so is his sincerity. Not that he made no mistakes and that his character was not here and there defective, but the eternal jewel was true. There may be a self-abnegation that is counterfeit, a generosity that is governed by a desire for popularity, and an oratorical display that is actuated by an ambition for advancement. God alone knows the heart of man; he alone can unweave the tangled skein of human motives and detect the hidden springs of human action.

But as far as we are able to judge after carefully and honestly weighing all the facts, and all his public acts; after looking at the whole picture, it seems to us that no man has been inspired in this War with a purer motive than Viscount Rhondda. He had cherished certain political ideals, and for over a generation he had waited for an opportunity to bring them to fruition. During all these years

there was in his mind the outline picture, not of the mere fulfilment of a prudential ambition, but of possible usefulness to the State and legitimate success. In this expectation he was not alone. Twenty years ago the late Sir S. T. Evans, Mr. T. J. Williams, M.P., and Viscount Rhondda, then plain D. A. Thomas, were travelling together from London to Wales. When Viscount Rhondda got out of the train at Newport, Sir S. T. Evans said to Mr. Williams, "There goes a man who would make the greatest Chancellor of the Exchequer that Great Britain ever produced."

There were others who had had glimpses of his greatness and possibilities, and who wondered why his great talents were not being utilized in the service of the State. But the law of ostracism had been applied to him as it has rarely been applied to any other public character, an ostracism not occasional, but which threatened to be permanent. It is an open secret that he himself was disappointed; he had been disappointed in men and in his party; he knew, as others knew, that he was being kept back, that his merits and claims were being ignored, and that in a democratic age by a so-called democratic government. It is what one might expect under an oligarchy.

True, the achievements of the best, most unselfish and heroic lives, seldom, if ever, equal the measure of ardent aspiration, but in human affairs there are no rewards for good aspirations as there are for good actions. In another chapter we try to trace the secret of the frustration of his political and national ideals. It is not altogether in himself,

that is in his independence, but rather in the political system, and in the measure that is always meted out to men who think for themselves, who have the courage to express their own thoughts, and, who, being conscious of their inherent gifts and their future possibilities, decline to walk along the dead level of the prairie, or to reflect and vote according to instructions. He belonged to a peculiar class of men. As such he must be judged, as he ought always to have been judged, by a peculiar standard.

Notwithstanding his singularity, and in spite of the law of ostracism, he at last saw the sun illuminating his horizon ; he saw that his possibilities for usefulness as a statesman, which others had seen long before it became manifest to the public, were about to be realized. So that he now stands forth revealed as one of the great men of his age, as well as one of the most unselfish. He was no adroit aspirant demagogue, or a lover of power for the gratification of an inordinate ambition, but a patriot who, with his death warrant staring him in the face, responded to the call of his nation's need, and who by the sheer merit of his own genius and by the greatness of his services, raised himself to the dignity of a recognized prince.

Counterfeit patriots do not play the part that he played. He undertook his great work as Food Controller, the most risky and difficult task that any man could possibly undertake, and that at the age of three score years, in full consciousness that he was shortening his life. He did not possess that which the old heathen philosophers regarded as the greatest good ; namely, a sound mind in a sound

body. A sound, clear, penetrating, organizing mind, he did possess, but not a sound body. The many illnesses from which he had suffered from time to time, and which, as we have already said, affected his temperament, had left their traces on his heart. A long life was not in store for him, even with the greatest care or with freedom from work and anxiety. But he knew that a much shorter life was in store for him if he did what his sense of duty prompted him to do.

The heart disease, we have been told, threatened to assume the form of *Angina Pectoris*; though sufferers from this malady who are able to free themselves from work and worry, and to take a careful supervision over their health, may live for years. Lord Rhondda, before he took charge of the Local Government Board, was informed by a specialist he consulted that his days would be few if he undertook any new task involving hard work and anxiety. Before he undertook the work of Food Controller, he was again told that two years were all that he could possibly expect in so difficult and exacting a position. He then informed some of his friends that he had just had his death warrant read out to him. This jocoseness was partly natural, partly intentional. After thinking the matter over, he said: "Two years will be enough." As is now known, he was granted one year; but into that one year he put more energy of mind and body, more enthusiasm, and more self-sacrificing zeal, than a great many have put during a lifetime. If he had been spared he would have rendered his country greater services, for his mind was full to the last of

far-reaching schemes which had for their object the amelioration of the social condition of the masses, and the development of the industrial possibilities of the British Empire, and in particular of Canada.

It is to the present Prime Minister that the country is indebted for placing Viscount Rhondda in a situation for which his great talents fitted him, and in which they appeared to the best advantage. It is, however, one thing to place a man in a position of responsibility, but quite a different thing for that man to show by practical results that he is equal to that position. The qualities which fit a man to deal with one set of problems may unfit him to deal with problems of a different character. The energy and decision which had eminently fitted the great William Pitt for the direction of a war which had proved successful, on sea and land, in Europe, America and Asia, were not needed in time of peace. As Macaulay said of him : " He was at length placed in situations in which neither his talents for administration nor his talents for debate appeared to the best advantage." The problem of war is one ; the problem of peace another ; vigour in one cause may be out of place and out of season in another. While genius may thrive under one condition, it may languish under another. The gift of oratory and the executive gift are not always compatible, or always found in the same person, or always allied with fortitude, with skill in reading the signs of the times, with knowledge of political economy, with diplomatic and administrative ability, or with the ability to meet great emergency, whether in war or in peace

Of Viscount Rhondda, however, it may justly be

said, that while he lacked the gift of oratory, he had the executive gift in an eminent degree. He possessed that type of genius which was as well adapted to war as to peace conditions. Indeed, to conquer was part of his character. All his life time he had to meet one pressing emergency after another, and he met them, as he met the emergency of the War, with fortitude and calmness. He had knowledge of political economy and of the principles of legislation, and though what he had to say in public, he did not say it as an ingenious orator would have done, yet like Oliver Cromwell he could rule, and rule with an iron rod. The path that he trod was not the path that leads to popularity, but the path that leads to duty, honour and usefulness. We know of no Welshman, and no political character, who so seldom condescended to flatter the people. Whenever he was at cross purposes with his own workmen, he never feared to tell them the truth to their faces. Yet we believe that he cared for them, and because he cared for their highest welfare he was always frank.

Viscount Rhondda had made a great reputation for himself in pre-war time, among the great captains of trade and industry. He was the controller of a wide-spread coal and carrying trade that radiated from Cardiff almost to the ends of the earth. As a business man he had given decisive proofs that he possessed very extraordinary abilities, the very abilities that were needed to make him a successful administrator of food supplies. When President Grant appointed General Gresham to the judgeship, Mr. Gresham asked the President who it

was that had recommended him. The President said: "The man that led that charge of your division at Peach Tree Creek, in July, 1861, where you were wounded and crippled for life and left for dead on the field; the man I knew to be a gallant soldier; the man who fought all through the war without a blemish upon his reputation for patriotism, bravery, fidelity and gallantry; he recommended you so strongly that I could not resist, and so I made that appointment." That man was Gresham himself. The force of his own character had recommended him.

The man who recommended Viscount Rhondda for the delicate and important mission to the United States and Canada in the summer of 1915, for the purpose of reorganizing the whole contract system under which those countries were supplying the United Kingdom and the Allies with the munitions of war; who recommended him to be President of the Local Government Board in December, 1916, and to be Food Controller in June, 1917, was himself.

That he should have been selected to proceed to the United States and Canada on such an important mission and at such a critical crisis, was but an additional proof of the great value attached to his rare business ability and its high diplomatic qualifications. That he should have undertaken the mission within a few weeks of the *Lusitania* disaster, and that he should have carried out his mission during his stay in America at his own expense, is but another proof of his patriotic zeal.

It was partly by avoiding extravagance; by estab-

lishing order and economy ; by placing his coal and carrying trade on a sound scientific basis, that he made a name for himself in the commercial world ; and it was the same course of action that he pursued in America and Canada, where he created the most favourable impression among the keenest, most practical and most eminent financiers and business men in both countries.

In Canada he made arrangements for the placing of orders on behalf of Britain and her Allies to the value of about half a billion dollars, which works out at the rate of over £12 per head of the population of the Dominion. The importance of his achievements was regarded with deferential admiration on the other side, and in a New York paper there appeared the comment that he had been the active agent "in bringing to pass the biggest reversal of policy in the last half-century of British history," as far as direct business methods between Canada and the Mother country were concerned. In addition to this, the contracts which he placed through the agency of Messrs. J. P. Morgan and Co. in the United States ran to over one thousand million dollars. It was during his stay as the Government representative in the United States that the American loan was negotiated, and here again, with Lord Reading and other expert advisers, he was master of a delicate and complicated situation. It was for these and other services that he was raised to the peerage in January, 1916, with the title of Baron Rhondda of Llanwern, from which he was advanced, just before his death, to the rank of Viscount.

History tells us that Lysander in the Hellespont and Agesilaus in Asia acquired fame abroad, but returned to be watched and depressed at home. This is not peculiar to their age nor to Sparta. But Viscount Rhondda went abroad to carry out a great business transaction which brought him fame, and he returned home to be honoured and elevated.

Paradoxical as it may seem to his own countrymen, who had learned to regard him as a hard, matter-of-fact, and an argumentative sort of man, with but little sentiment and no sentimentality, without any passion for frivolous and tawdry ornament, and without any diffuseness of style, Canadians treated him, not only as a sound business man, but as a humorist, as is shown by the following reference made to him in the *Winnipeg Telegram* of November 1st, 1915: "The greatest of Welsh humorists is Mr. D. A. Thomas. No one suspected that the hard-headed Welsh coal magnate had as strong a sense of humour as the author of Sam Slick. His farewell announcement has convulsed Ottawa with laughter. He spanked General Sir Sam, told him he was a good active little boy, but to keep his fingers out of the jam pot; gave General Bertram a fine dash of soft soap, but warned him that business was not his forte; praised the Canadian manufacturers for their energy and enterprise, but suggested that smaller profits would show greater patriotism; and kicked out Colonel Cantley, general manager of the Nova Scotia shell game, with such a grace that this gentleman thinks he has been promoted."

It is, however, necessary to observe that Viscount

Rhondda rendered substantial service to the State before he became officially connected with the Government, and he would have rendered greater service if his advice had been followed. In the first months of the War it was evident that the demands of the Navy would practically absorb almost the whole of the output of the Admiralty collieries. Viscount Rhondda suggested that the mines should be taken over by the State in the same way as the railways had been taken, but his suggestion was not considered practicable, though it has since been adopted. He also offered to place at the disposal of the Admiralty the whole of the business organization which had been created under his administration. He filled the position of Chairman of the Clothing Committee and of the Finance Committee of the Welsh Army Corps. He was also Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Asquith Coalition Government to consider the coal position of the country after the War, and he was a member of the War Office Contracts Committee, and a member of Lord Balfour's Committee on industrial questions after the War.

Great surprise was expressed when he was appointed President of the Local Government Board, for the reason that such a position was not considered compatible with his genius and experience as an organizer of industry and finance. Government departments are not always suitable for a single man of independence of mind and of the first order of intellect. As a business man of wide experience, accustomed to deal promptly and effectively with issues that arise from day to day, it must have been

for him something of a purgatory to encounter the ordered routine of the Civil Service. But he threw himself into the work with characteristic energy and a cheerful spirit—though after some hesitation—fully resolved to be master of the situation, and to direct the affairs of the Department in the light of public requirements, and with a business method borrowed from his own training and experience rather than in the light of the methods that had prevailed at the Local Government Board.

“My heart,” he is reported to have said, “is with the Local Government Board. That’s a magnificent office ; it’s one of the best things we’ve got ; and I’m determined that my work there shan’t be thrown away. We must have a Ministry of Health. All this great nation wants to keep it in the forefront is sound health, real education, and incentives to rise. Every child in the land must be given a chance, and genius of every kind must be handsomely encouraged. The State must look to it.”

It is to his credit that he raised this Department out of the rut of precedence, and made it the fount and inspiration of reform in municipal and county administration, especially in regard to public health. He was impressed with the waste of life through the toll of the War and with the necessity of using every effort to stop the preventable waste of child life. Here he appears in the light of a humanitarian reformer. His conviction was that the end in view could be accomplished through one Minister, who should be held responsible for the health services of the nation, instead of some half dozen departments as at present. So persistently did he keep in the foreground the need for a Ministry of Health

that to-day its creation is one of the pledges of the Government. If Lord Rhondda had lived he would have undoubtedly succeeded in his object in spite of inter-departmental jealousies and opposition.

The office of Food Controller was not a position of great historical dignity like the Premiership ; it was of recent origin and established for war purposes. But it was a position that required the heart of a hero and a will of iron. A soft nature would never have done ; and a middle course of compromise, the expedient of all weak natures in a great crisis, would have been fatal. Failure would have secured for him the contempt of the people, if not their hatred, and the serious discontent that prevailed throughout the country might have passed beyond all restraint and developed into a revolution. Not only was his own reputation at stake, but national unity and the efficiency of the war effort made by the British Empire.

The people had reason to be discontented, for the food question had been woefully mismanaged, and pacifists and traitors were not slow to take advantage of it in order to fan the flame. The continued increase in the cost of living was considered unjustifiable in the light of increased war profits, and almost every section of the community had its own method of solving the problem. There were some who urged that the Government should supply food to the people at cost price. Labour deputations demanded the purchase and control of all food, the retailing of food at legitimate prices, bread at 6d. per quartern loaf, local food control committees, municipal food services and school canteens. Some

sections of the Press clamoured for compulsory individual rationing, as against the policy of controlling prices.

It was argued that the control of trade and the fixing of prices, two of the most difficult operations in the economic sphere, could not be effected with advantage to the community by an inexperienced Government department. It was also argued that State intervention could not stop profiteering ; on the contrary, it would add a new uncertainty, and uncertainty was inevitable. Lord Rhondda was warned that a class of speculators would spring up to make profits out of Government licences ; that there would be speculations in prohibitions and permits, and that if the price was fixed at one end of a trade operation the other end would be left loose. He was also told that the fixing of prices and the preventing of profits was a false sense, and that the only radical cure was in the increase of production, for if production was increased the market would be affected beneficially for the consumer, and that in the long run the supply would regulate the price.

So various and conflicting were the solutions suggested, and such was the danger to the country—though the true magnitude of the danger had not been realized for the reason that the people were not in possession of all the facts—that even the most constant mind might well have been disturbed. Even with the limited information the country possessed “ the stoutest held his breath for a while.” The idea of conquering the Germans had, among a vast number of people, given way to the fear of

starvation ; their thoughts centred about the question of food. The temper of the people was an influence of an absolutely prime importance. Even Lord Rhondda himself said to Mr. Clynes more than once, that unless they could change the temper of the people and the current of public opinion, they could never succeed.

Lord Devonport had proved unequal to the task ; several public men, including Mr. Robert Smillie, had refused the responsibility of an office which promised instead of reward the unpopularity associated with a thankless job. Wellington, it has been said, would never have won any battles but for the intervention of good fortune. That Lord Rhondda's acceptance of the appointment was a marvellous piece of good fortune for himself and for the country, is now beyond question. Supremacy and failure, historic greatness and historic littleness, are often the product of temporary circumstances, and that in spite of personal force or personal merit. Father Tyrrel remarked on one occasion that a grain of dust blown in a man's eye at a certain moment, may alter the course of the world's history, and still more easily the course of his own history.

Conduct, said Herbert Spencer, will appear perfect only when the environment is perfect, to no inferior environment is it suitably adapted. So it may be said of genius, it appears at its best when the environment is suitable. The reason why Viscount Rhondda's last work was the best, was that his genius had at last found its right centre of energy, and had been placed in that environment which was conducive to its highest development. It had

abided its hour, but when that hour came it came decisively.

It was a piece of good fortune for the country because it had discovered a great organizing genius, whose field of mental vision was wide and extensive, and who had a magnificent inclusive view of any and every business problem with which he had had to deal. His predecessors had stumbled along, feeling their way, trying this and that expedient, but when Viscount Rhondda had grasped the situation, he had a definite programme of future operations before him. He knew the actual and the potential, which enabled him to anticipate events and contingencies, and therefore to determine the next movement in advance.

As it is natural to suppose, Viscount Rhondda was subject to criticism, some of which was reasonable and some unreasonable. On the one hand, he was criticized for talking too much ; on the other, that he did not talk enough by disclosing what his policy was going to be. He was criticized because he still remained at the Local Government Board some time after his appointment as Food Controller. It was charged against him that he was trying to run both departments, merely putting in overtime at the Ministry of Food. He did seem reluctant to leave the Local Government Board, just when his great schemes were about coming to fruition. It was quite a good thing for himself and for the country that the new Food Controller should have come to his office from the Local Government Board, for the way to a better distribution was, unquestionably, to be sought through co-operation with the local

government authorities. It was but natural that he should, before taking any bold and decisive step, carefully weigh all the factors in the problem. He had everything to investigate and much to learn, but his was only the hesitancy of the eagle before he has finally chosen the direction of his flight.

What, then, was the problem that confronted Viscount Rhondda in June, 1917? Some of the factors we have already indicated, such, for instance, as the enormous advance in prices, which in the case of imported food-stuffs were more than double those ruling before the War. There was also the factor of diminished food supply, a large proportion of which comes from abroad, America in particular. These supplies could only be bought at the market price in the country of their origin, which made the control of prices in this country a very difficult question. Large provision firms were making profits against their will, partly for the reason that they had to sell at the market price; others were endeavouring to make all the profits they could at the expense of the public, especially the poorer classes. Then the question of prices was closely related to finance, credit and currency, as well as to war conditions. There was also the consideration that high prices stimulated production abroad.

As to the shortage in staple foods, when Lord Rhondda took office the harvests of the European Allies were five million bushels short; they had been obliged to kill off more than thirty million head of their stock cattle, and in view of our own deficiency and of the reduction of tonnage, sixty-five per cent of our essential food-stuffs had in that year to be

imported from America. In addition to this, the Allies were buying against one another, which made the creation of an Inter-ally Council on War Purchases, and the substitution of a single European purchaser and a single American vendor, an absolute necessity. It is hardly necessary to observe that this was a highly complicated factor in the situation. Also, the prices of home-grown supplies had to be fixed at a rate which would be fair to the consumer, and which, while preventing profiteering, would induce the producer to remain in the business.

Meat was another factor in the problem, especially in the matter of distribution and the fixing of prices. The difficulty was to secure a general reduction without inflicting loss on the farmers who had bought store cattle with the expectation of realizing high prices in the autumn. The maximum prices fixed—74s. for September, 72s. for October, 67s. for November and December, and 60s. for January—would enable the farmer who had paid high prices for his stores to realize during the earlier months without very serious losses, and would at the same time involve an immediate reduction of prices to the consumer, which by the end of the year would, it was estimated, reach at least 6d. a lb. on prime joints. It was also necessary to determine whether the margin between the price of cattle and the price of beef would, in the average case, yield to the dealer or butcher a fair but not unreasonable rate of profit compared with the profit he would have obtained under pre-war conditions.

The problem affecting sugar was not one of price but of distribution. As to milk, the fixing of prices

was a very difficult matter. On account of the shortage of imported butter and cheese, the dairyman was disposed to specialize in the production of these commodities at the expense of the milk supply, for the reason that it would pay him better to sell milk as milk than to convert it into either butter or cheese, except during the summer months when the abundance of grass supplied a surplus of milk. Further, the grazing farmers were making such phenomenal profits that it was clear that they would vehemently oppose the fixing of prices for live cattle.

In brief, the problems that confronted Viscount Rhondda were the elimination of profiteering in food-stuffs, the formation of a scheme of decentralization for the administration of his Department, and the establishment of a system of compulsory rationing of foods, the supply of which was insufficient to allow unrestricted consumption. Lord Rhondda's energies were devoted to carrying through these three main policies, his first condition being freedom of action. He was not satisfied with the powers that he had, he demanded more. By a new Order in Council, he was placed in a position in which the Admiralty, the Army Council and the Munitions Ministry had been for some time. The Order enabled him to requisition the output of any factory, and to buy stocks that were stored in the country without regard to the price ruling in the market. Manufacturers could not force him to pay the market prices, but only such prices as were based on the actual cost of production, plus a reasonable pre-war rate profit. In the case of the middleman, or

speculator, who had acquired food-stuffs otherwise than in the normal course of business, he was to be allowed no profit at all, or one less than pre-war rates. No more powerful weapon could have been put in the hands of any statesman, and it shows the measure of confidence the Government had in Viscount Rhondda.

At the Local Government Board he had shown himself to be a firm believer in decentralization, and before he had been Food Controller many weeks, he had persuaded the Government to entrust to local authorities important duties in connection with the distribution and prices of food, and with the maintenance of national food economy. When at the end of the year a scarcity of tea, butter, meat and margarine led to the appearance of food queues in the industrial districts, Viscount Rhondda lost no time in enforcing the principle of compulsory regulation of food consumption, which the War Cabinet, at his request, had sanctioned. His action caused but very little irritation ; his plans were so well laid that the food situation was eased and food queues disappeared. He also rendered the Government very substantial service, for on account of its delay and inefficiency in laying the foundation of a rationing system, and in coping with the resentment caused by the inflation of price of many articles of food, it had incurred the displeasure and hostility of a very large section of the public.

Viscount Rhondda at once grasped the fact that compulsory rationing was the natural corollary of any organized effort to solve the problems of prices and supply. But before that, he had organized on a

scientific basis the available and prospective supplies of bread, potatoes, meat, milk and fats. He reduced the price of the loaf by including a bread subsidy among the items of war expenditure ; this he did in order to bring bread within the reach of the bulk of the people. It was a drastic expedient, but, broadly speaking, it was felt to be fully justified.

The loaf was "stretched" by the admixture of flour other than that derived from wheat, by special contribution to the farmers to encourage their production. Through the patriotism and self-denial of the American people, this country received much more than its usual surplus of American wheat, which greatly strengthened the hands of Viscount Rhondda and contributed very naturally to the solution of any food problem.

In order to ascertain the profits normally made by dealers and manufacturers, Viscount Rhondda decentralized the Costings Department, divided the country into separate areas, and appointed authorized accountants to perform the necessary work in each area.

He caused to be laid down plants for the production of margarine, and bought up practically all the raw material that was to be found for this commodity. All the margarine factories in the United Kingdom are now under the control of the Ministry of Food, and the margarine supplies are allocated to the various areas. It will thus be seen that Viscount Rhondda was the means of establishing the Food Department on strictly business lines. The middleman has been eliminated, and the exploitation of food supplies by speculators has been practically

brought to an end. Famine is no longer feared ; we may go further and say that it is no longer a thinkable contingency. From whatever point of view we may look at the labours of Viscount Rhondda as Food Controller, the most fastidious critic cannot but admit that it has been as complete a triumph of organizing power as has ever been known. Yet he did not boast, he only said that he accepted the invidious post to insure the right of existence for the people who were patiently bearing so many painful sacrifices.

It becomes, therefore, an interesting question how Viscount Rhondda succeeded where his predecessors failed ; and how he was able to make his system of food control the flexible and efficient instrument which we know to-day ; for though he had the advice of experts and the able assistance of Mr. Clynes, who is now his successor in office, his was the master mind that brought order out of chaos. His success must be attributed partly to the experience which he gained at the Local Government Board, as well as to the experience he had gained as a business man ; partly, to his executive vigour and his strategic force. Often the man who gives birth to an idea or to a project, fails to make it dominant, for the reason that he lacks directive energy and magnetic impetus. This is illustrated in the career of some of the most commanding figures in the history of the world. Maximillian I. was a man of good intelligence, and so alert that he was cleverer than any of his councillors in finding many expedients for every need, but though he was abundant in the power of invention, he was so lacking in power

of execution that he did not know how to carry out any of the expedients which he had devised.

The same powerlessness characterized the Greek and Roman philosophers ; they saw both the evil and the remedy, but they were wanting in the force necessary to carry the reforms into the real and practical world. Philosophers may observe economic and political evils, and even discover the right remedy, but are impotent in regard to the production of practical results, because of their inability to move the national will in a corresponding direction. It was so in the case of Pericles and Aristotle. Indeed, most of the Greek states perished through the very causes pointed out by Aristotle.

Viscount Rhondda not only grasped the economic problem involved in the question of food supply and discovered the remedy, but he possessed the executive force and the will power necessary to carry out his own plans ; once he had decided on a course of action as the best and most expedient, he would never waver. He might modify his plans as he did in the case of the farmers with whom he came into sharp conflict, for he was ever ready to listen to advice, but he acted on his own judgment. He had a temper which was exceedingly tenacious, and a keen intellect which enabled him to see further than men who had not his experience. It had not been his habit to drop a half-finished measure and take up a new one. It was this steadiness of purpose, this inflexibility of will, that enabled him to overcome difficulties that seemed to others insurmountable, and to execute the whole of what he had projected.

His success was due partly to the fact that he could speak with authority on every aspect of every question that came within his jurisdiction as Food Controller. Farmers found that he knew something about agriculture; trade representatives found that he had an intimate knowledge of trade conditions; economists found that he was well versed in economics. The effect of all this was that he was able to meet and subdue all opposition.

He conciliated the populace by placing the different classes on an equality with regard to opportunities for a meal. It was the working and poorer classes that received his first attention. Were it not for them it is doubtful whether he would have undertaken the office of Food Controller. If it was the hour of his greatest responsibility, it was also the hour of his greatest joy, because of the consciousness that he was able to provide daily bread and the necessities of life to millions of people who would otherwise be in want.

Some Socialists in the mining area of South Wales have not been able to resist the temptation to make capital out of the fact that Viscount Rhondda won his fame, and accomplished the greatest work of his life, on collectivist lines. It was the irony of fate, they say, that the greatest organizer of private profit-making companies was at last compelled to take up a position in which he would be judged wholly and solely by his success in smashing private profiteering. Lord Rhondda, they tell us, possessed those talents which the Collectivist State will require to make use of if it is to be established on economic lines. But during all his business career he had

been a servant of dividend-hunting shareholders, whose interests were fundamentally anti-socialist.

When, however, we are further told, he came to deal with a great crisis which affected the interests of a nation as a whole, he was compelled to abandon his individualistic ideas, and to accept, frankly and boldly, those collectivist ideals of the common good as opposed to private profits, which the representatives of the South Wales Miners' Federation had been preaching to him and to his coal-owning colleagues from time to time. If he wanted to be successful after the War there was no alternative but for him to accept and put in practice the doctrine of Collectivism.

It seems superfluous to point out to these Socialists that Viscount Rhondda had already been eminently successful ; and that in the years before the War he was in the way of amassing a huge fortune, not on collectivist, but on individualistic lines. He himself publicly declared that when the War was over he would return to the individualistic system, because he believed that the total life of the nation must still continue to be individualistic.

It was by the rivalry of individualism, he declared, that the organizer had been made. " Look at the collier," he is reported to have said, " who does piece work and the collier who is paid by time. There you have the difference in embryo between Individualism and Socialism." He was quite prepared to consider the question of the Nationalization of Railways, and, after the railways, coal ; but he held that the individualistic system gave the greatest freedom and the greatest incentives to progress and

liberty. His own reported words were: "In abnormal times you may do abnormal things. In war the State may take complete control of a nation. It may interfere, not only with trade, it may even interfere with human nature. But peace will return and the ancient and normal conditions will re-assert themselves. Trade will need the old incentives. Human nature will demand its ancient freedoms. Men will take back their liberties, and only by the fullest exercise of those liberties can the State hope for a vital existence."

It is above all things necessary, not only to avoid doing Lord Rhondda an injustice, but to get a real understanding of what he himself thought and meant. His point of view was, that the times were exceptional, not only as regards food, but everything. He had no economic theories to maintain, no political prejudices to subserve, no personal interest to advance. He was not thinking of individualism or collectivism as such, but of the best policy to meet the requirement of the new situation. He was thinking only of the welfare of the people. He saw no inconsistency in playing the part of a collectivist during the War, and of an individualist in pre-war or post-war times. This is the real test of patriotism and of true statesmanship.

A glance at the general features of our governmental system during the War, of our industrial system, and of the restrictions placed upon the liberties of the people, will show the transformation which the country has undergone. Very little is left of individual liberty; even the House of Commons has lost its sovereignty. But these

changes are temporary, and due to the exigencies of the War. Tried by the only touchstone applicable to governments, and to high statesmanship, that is, the capacity to devise means for the highest welfare of the governed, both in normal and abnormal times, Viscount Rhondda will go down to posterity as an organizer and administrator of the highest order.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

IN taking a brief general survey of the points we have canvassed, and of Viscount Rhondda's life as a whole, what is the conclusion? We have not been at pains to seek or invent curious incidents of his early life. There was nothing prophetic of after-greatness; there were no signs of precocity, or of any perceptible difference between him and other children; there was first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn. What excellence he manifested in his manhood was the result of slow and patient labour. He had within him the elements of greatness which were moulded, strengthened and matured, by circumstances in alliance with his own will power, ambition, and his confidence in himself.

Viscount Rhondda was among the most unpredictable of men. Much as those who were closely associated with him in business and politics, and who had watched the development of his vast commercial enterprises, admired and appreciated his organizing and administrative ability, none of them had any expectation of such a glorious end to his human career. There were few, if any, that were sanguine enough to imagine that the man who had gone through so many vicissitudes, who had been an object of mis-

trust and vituperation on the one hand, of trust and admiration on the other ; and alternately of praise and disparagement by the same class of men, would have died as he did, one of the most illustrious of his generation, whose name was then pronounced with pride and gratitude by Britons in every land, and even by patriots alien in blood, tradition and civilization.

Indeed, his after-greatness and popularity was as much of a surprise to himself as to his friends, for though he had all along been conscious of his own abilities, and, to some degree, of his own potentialities, and had hoped one day to become a Cabinet Minister, this hope he abandoned when he finally departed from Parliament, shaking off the dust of his feet against it because party wire-pullers would not recognize him officially ; and when he resumed active relations with the coal trade, where he was his own master in his own kingdom, and where he could on his merits challenge comparison with any man.

That he was happier, though disappointed, for having regained his freedom, we have his own assurance. Even those who considered him disqualified for active party politics, could neither dispute nor share his supremacy in the sphere where knowledge of business, credit, finance, banking and economic problems count. The very warmth of the tribute which they paid him in the House of Commons on the day of his death, was the measure of their own condemnation of their past action in ostracizing him, and in depriving the State of his services for so many years. British Statesmen have

not been noted for their gift of divination, particularly in the years preceding the War. In their treatment of Viscount Rhondda, they not only showed a lamentable lack of the gift of divination, but of a sense of justice and fair play ; they certainly cannot, in this attitude towards him, pride themselves on their prescience and political wisdom. Much of the trouble in South Africa to-day is due to personal feeling or animosity between leaders of public opinion. This is what the leaders and wire-pullers of the Liberal party did in relation to Viscount Rhondda ; they thrust him aside, and refused him an opportunity of serving the State on purely personal grounds.

Macaulay, in his reflections on Mitford's *History of Greece*, dwells upon Mitford's love of singularity, which led him to spell *island* without an *s* and to place two dots over the last letter of *idea*. That Viscount Rhondda was a singular personality, with odd and protruding idiosyncrasies, will not be denied ; but to say that he was, on that account, unemployable, is neither just nor true. Mr. Winston Churchill, a man of extraordinary talents, was considered employable by Mr. Asquith and the Liberal party, and that in spite of his extreme singularity, his protruding idiosyncrasies, his vexatious independence and self-assertiveness, and, we may add, his tragic failures. He was restored to office in defiance of the most matured public judgment ; but Viscount Rhondda's record as a business man, accustomed to deal with great issues in conjunction with his brother and his colleagues, was one of undoubted success, and Mr. Asquith and the party wire-pullers were aware of the fact.

When Viscount Rhondda was given his first opportunity as President of the Local Government Board, he proved that he was employable. Though a man of his initiative, energy and independence of mind, must have been bored with the routine and troublesome precedents of that Department, there was no serious friction. He proved that he was employable when he went to America and Canada on behalf of the Ministry of Munitions, to carry out transactions of vast importance to Great Britain and the Allies; and where he had to co-operate, not with ordinary men, but with men who knew as much about finance, credit and banking, as he himself did. There was no misunderstanding and no break of any kind, but perfect concord and good will. Though he was his own master as Food Controller, and had been invested with greater power than the King, for the reason that his own will was law, there was no friction and no resignations, whether voluntary or enforced, such as have taken place since on account of differences of opinion or lack of cohesion and co-operation. Let the blunt truth be faced and confessed.

Viscount Rhondda was not given the position in political life which his great talents merited, because he was not a *persona grata* with Mr. Asquith and the officials of the Liberal Party, for the simple reason that he was a man of honest independence of mind who valued political integrity above party intrigues. There can be no greater reflection on the old party system than that the very man who was denied office over a period of twenty-three years, was afterwards eminently successful in the discharge of

the duties of the most exacting of the State departments, one of which was in existence before the War, the other created to deal with the conditions of war.

The only difference between Viscount Rhondda's singularity and that of many of those who were given a preference, and who were given lucrative positions which he did not desire, was this: whereas his singularity was not merely the singularity of temperament, but of genius, theirs was the singularity of mediocrity, and, as subsequent events proved, of palpable inefficiency.

Viscount Rhondda never ranted about democracy, or patriotism, or liberty; yet he was at heart a democrat, a patriot and a lover of liberty. But he knew, as every educated man knows, that Democracy is still on its trial, and that Democracy, like Monarchy, is salutary within limits, but fatal in excess. Democracy he had studied in its principle and action; he knew the economic laws and theories as well as the spiritual and physical causes that have contributed to its growth. But his democratic ideal was not that of a modern Radical; for while he believed in liberty, equality he regarded as not only undesirable but unattainable—so long as human nature remains what it is, so long as men differ in brain power, capacity and inventive genius. He no more believed in the rule of one, than he believed in the cry *Vox populi vox Dei*; his political ideal was a balance of powers that would preserve both liberty and authority within the State, and keep both liberty and authority subject to law.

To him the democratic ideal which means that

we should have nobody above us, no one to dictate to us, meant despotism, and a despotism devoid of virtue and moral inspiration. In so far as Bureaucracy, in spite of all its defects and limitations, insisted upon discipline, he was for Bureaucracy. To precipitate the nation into a Socialistic State before Democracy has successfully passed its special test would be, he thought, a disaster both to the State and to Democracy itself ; and he believed that one of the results of State Socialism would be to discourage individual initiative, energy of character, and practical invention by confiscating the proceeds of discovery. The fairyland in which militant Socialists live was, to him, impossible.

He was by no means ignorant of the fundamental principles of political science, but he never imagined popular governments to be always a blessing or always a curse. He was not of those who pronounce a particular constitution or a particular form of government—good or wise—upon abstract principles, and without any regard to the psychical peculiarities, or the education, or the civilization, or the economic conditions of the people who are to be governed. “ A good government,” says Macaulay, “ like a good coat, is that which fits the body for which it is designed.” Viscount Rhondda held this view, and he held the view that a democratic form of government was the best adapted to make the people contented and prosperous. But he also held that if the people were to be governed for their own good, they should not be governed by their passions, or ignorance, or passing moods ; or that statesmen should tone down their convictions or their ideal of

what is best in the highest interest of the State and of the community, in order that they may fit in more softly into popular expectations, or conciliate ill-formed and irresponsible sections of the people, in order to get their votes.

He did not subscribe to the dictum that because a certain thing is desired by a majority or by a great number of the people, it is in itself a guarantee of its justice and utility. Yet no one could possibly pay greater respect than he did to serious and well-matured public feeling, and no one could show greater capacity to analyze public feeling.

He was not an abstract theorist, but a practical man and politician, who believed in the extension of power in proportion to the knowledge and capacity of the people to use that power with wisdom and moderation. The essence of true statesmanship, he thought, was in subordinating the accidental to the essential, not the essential to the accidental or the temporary. Also in putting the desires and passions of the populace to the test of reason, rather than to the test of party expediency. He was not the type of politician to endorse such utterances as we have recently heard; "It is vital to the interest of Liberalism that the party should support the principle of the workers sharing in the determination of industrial conditions." Not because he was a Capitalist, or a large employer of labour, but because he had higher ends in view than party ends, whether they be Liberal or Conservative. Popular thought is not exempt from error, and it is not always a safe guide for statesmen; it has often gone astray on many important questions. It is the function of

statesmen to govern, not to obey or to submit without due consideration for the interest of law and order, or for the interest of the community as a whole. True, the private ambitions of a great party in the State may coincide with the welfare of the general public ; so may the personal ambition and selfishness of an individual statesman, or ruler, who is moved simply by the thought of self. It is this converging or intertwining of different classes of interests with the interests of an ambitious politician, or ruler, that explains the secret of the success of such politicians and rulers. Such coincidences are rare, as in the case of Peter the Great, William the Silent, Queen Elizabeth, and a few statesmen of more modern times.

Politics he never treated as a game ; he never sought to make it subservient to his own self-interest. He had none of the little arts which bring forward little men. There was no pushing, or elbowing ; no manœuvring for position or popularity which has been a characteristic of politicians of a more selfish and servile habit of mind. Indeed, there was an element of puritan severity in his politics, which was to him a matter of principle rather than of expediency. This is one of the reasons why he got nothing, while some with half his ability and very little of his political honesty, got a good deal.

Neither did he treat business as a game. He naturally looked for interest on his investments and profits on his undertakings ; this he always kept in view, and he never concealed it. But he never sought to accumulate wealth, or to use the power that wealth brought, for the exaltation of himself

or of his own class. It has been truly said that those who pay wages ought not to be the political masters of those who earn them, for laws should be adapted to those who have the heaviest stake in the country, for whom misgovernment means, not mortified pride or stinted luxury, but want and pain and degradation, and risk to their own lives and to their children's souls.

Viscount Rhondda was both an employer of labour and the political representative of a great industrial community, but he was in no sense their political master, and was never considered as such by those who returned him, time after time, by larger majorities than had been given to any other Welsh representative. While he fought Socialism and Syndicalism, he was not unmindful of the need and possibility of reconciling some socialistic ideals with the principles which he, as an Individualist and a Capitalist, respected. If any of our readers disagree with his arguments and conclusions in Chapter VI, or regard his economic outlook as a selfish one, it cannot be denied that he honestly thought that some solution of the economic problem on a purely business basis was possible, and that he sought with equal honesty to discover that solution.

One of the points on which he joined issue with Socialists was, in their complete subordination of the ethical element to utilitarian and economic considerations. He was also convinced that if the Socialists came into power in this country, and had the government of the country in their hands, they would view all questions, political and economic, from their own angle of observation exclusively,

and as they affected their own special interests and theories, not as they might affect the welfare of the community or the nation as a whole. This was his experience of the Socialists in the South Wales coal-fields. He found that they mistrusted every movement that did not originate with themselves, that they hated the upper and had no sympathy with the intellectual classes ; that with them might and right were the same, and that a majority can do anything ; that it was expedient in the interests of Socialism that private enterprise should be checked and that all Capitalists should be banished, on the ground that they are obnoxious to the public good, and by public good they mean their own good, the good of individual members and sections, not the common good, that is, the good of society as a whole when considered as an independent entity.

He believed in progress, but he had his own ideas as to what constitutes progress, and as to the means whereby progress should be stimulated and maintained. He took cognizance of the changing character of the various classes composing the nation. Being an educated man, and a student of political science, he knew that nations without desires and ambitions cannot prosper materially, morally, or intellectually, and that discontent has played a great part in human progress. But he did not agree that increase of desires necessarily promotes increase of production, or produces more efficient workers. He held that the maxim was good within limits, but only within limits ; that if progress is not to be intermittent and spasmodic, but real and lasting, and to issue in contentment, national desires should

be stimulated and increased with caution and prudence, otherwise it might end in disaster.

Viscount Rhondda was an Imperialist, and that at a time when Imperialism was not so popular in Wales as it is to-day, though it is still an anathema in some quarters. He was friendly to any policy which had for its object the reduction of unnecessary or wasteful public expenditure. He knew as a business man that economy in the application of public funds, or of national wealth, was a most valuable principle to act upon. His motto was "keep within your means." One of the lessons taught him by his father, who laid the foundation of his fortune, was that if he could save only one sovereign during the year, at the end of the year he would be one sovereign better off than at the beginning. It was by practising frugality and economy that his father was able to place his family above anxiety, and to give Viscount Rhondda and his brother, Mr. J. H. Thomas, a start in life ; it was a quality that he himself practised, and of which he was not ashamed.

But highly as he valued economy, he did not believe in practising economy at the expense of the efficiency of either the Army or the Navy. He believed in social reform, and in correcting the evils of society, but not by rash measures, or by crippling the resources of the State, or by jeopardizing our national freedom and independence. He was for peace, but not at any price. He also maintained that the State had a right to expect obedience and sacrifice from its citizens. There could be no true patriotism, he thought, without willingness to make

sacrifices for the good of the State and the integrity of the Empire.

While he believed in the demand for a larger recognition of any distinctive Welsh quality or characteristic, and in the aspiration after a larger measure of autonomy, his ideal of a great Empire was one in which all the component parts were free to develop for their own good and for the consolidation of the Empire. His patriotism was not bounded by racial ties, traditions or interests. Though he prided himself on being a Welshman, his patriotism was British rather than Welsh, and he was among those who think that Wales has gained much through her connection with England and with the British Empire ; and that the preservation of the integrity of the Empire, and of its material and moral advancement, is as important to Wales as to any other nation, not merely for the sake of her own safety, but also because the tendency of British policy and statesmanship, British religion and British civilization has, on the whole, been to develop a higher nationality everywhere, to promote the cause of civilization, and to mould new worlds into sober freedom, not by right of control, but by educational and spiritual quickening.

It has always been, and so long as human nature remains what it is, it will always be, an object of ambition to be the first man, or among the first men, in the community or the nation, whether it be in politics, commerce or religion. Viscount Rhondda had this ambition and he achieved it at last. It came to him by chance, and chance is a great factor in life ; it has often made a difference between

historic greatness and historic littleness, between fortune and misfortune. The chance that brought him distinction was the chance of war, and war is the surest passport to immortality. Alexander and Napoleon are still names of glory, but Homer is comparatively forgotten, and Gibbon, who took twenty-seven years to perfect the colossal work that forms an epoch in historical literature, and which he completed when only fifty-one, is a name unknown to the commonalty.

If Viscount Rhondda had died before the outbreak of the War, he would have been known only as a successful business man, and his memory would be charged in the industrial community of South Wales with many things in his capacity as industrial magnate of which he was wholly innocent, and with some things in regard to which his action was open to serious and legitimate criticism. His greatness would have been toned down by epigrammatic sentences. Shelley never lived to see his works read, with the single exception of *Cenci*, which ran through two editions in his lifetime. Wordsworth and Browning were only honoured when they were old. Indeed, it is one of the mysteries of life why celebrity is so uncertain a quantity, and why real distinction of intellect is sometimes recognized, and sometimes overlooked.

But while Viscount Rhondda never enjoyed, during his whole political life, the harvest of reputation that was undoubtedly his due, through the accident of war he now ranks as a great organizing and administrative statesman who had a policy of his own, and the will and executive power to carry

it out. England never had a more popular dictator ; but, as in some historic cases, so in his, dictatorship was the necessity of the hour. It needed a Richelieu to crush the nobles, to establish French unity, and to inaugurate a new national policy. It needed two sympathetic, though somewhat diverse, geniuses, such as Julius and Augustus Cæsar, to deliver Roman administration and the destiny of the civilized world from mob violence and the rapacity of the patrician order. It needed a man of will and insight like Chatham to give England an Empire, and it needed a Viscount Rhondda to help to enable England to preserve this Empire.

Then, how will he appear to future generations ? How durable will be his fame ? Will his individuality wear out into oblivion ? Will his reputation increase or diminish as time goes on ? There are two kinds of social immortality. One man outlines himself in and through his party, or his followers : he was a party leader ; he gave his party its message and mission ; even its inspiration. He gathered into himself its thoughts and ambitions, embodied and manifested them, and led his adherents by them. Another lives again in his own personality, in and through the work he accomplished, irrespective of party organization, or party interests.

Viscount Rhondda was no party leader, though he sought to teach his own party, and to elevate its ethical standard. His influence was not towards conformity with traditional party or political methods, or officialism, but towards aiding the best man to secure his due and rightful place ; towards exact fitness in all leadership. True, his teaching

and example did not bear much fruit in his lifetime, partly for the reason that there is less scope for individuality to-day than there was in past generations, and because there is less liberty given to it.

The reasons are not far to seek. The power of common thought, whether expressed through the party system or through the masses of the people, is infinitely harder to combat or to wear down. There has been a remarkable increase of ideas. It takes a larger number of ideas to make a man or a party to-day than ever before. A feather and a sword were enough for the old knight ; the great men of past ages spent a hundred years on one dogma or war-drill.

Life is also more complex ; education has made enormous strides ; public thought and opinion has reached a higher level ; even the ordinary artisan is fairly well able to take an intelligent interest in the affairs of his country ; cheaper university training gives equal chances of intellectual training and equipment to a far larger number to-day than was the case a few years ago ; sources of information have multiplied, and the power of democracy is such that it makes it more difficult for the individual genius to assert political influence ; it is more risky for him if he is ambitious for power, to come into collision with the strength or prejudices of the masses, or with the strength and prejudices and traditions of a great party. This was the experience of Viscount Rhondda. But his ideal will abide, though his life was impoverished and his spirit embittered through its non-fulfilment during his Parliamentary career.

Not that he miscalculated his strength, or was wanting in experience or knowledge of men and of the world outside ; or that his personality was marked by feebleness and insipidity ; or that he did not possess the force of character necessary to meet the duties and difficulties of a responsible position as a minister of the Crown. It was not for these reasons that he was thwarted, and that the ideals which he cherished when he left Cambridge and subsequently entered political life, were not embodied in any legislative achievement of importance, and that it did not fall to his lot to form political alliances at Westminster.

It was that his mental condition and outlook differed from that of the average politician. His tendency was towards individualism rather than towards conformity to a common type, or to the common traditions of a party system. He could not be bound by prevailing opinion ; he took a large and comprehensive view of every problem that confronted him. Such a man if possessed of real intellectual power and the gift of eloquence, must of necessity exercise great influence. Viscount Rhondda possessed the one, but lacked the other.

Possibly, other commanding personalities will appear and spring into prominence in the sphere in which he distinguished himself ; and another epoch will, to some extent at any rate, obliterate the present. Wellington's victories overshadowed those of Marlborough ; in proportion as the fame of the one forged to the front, that of the other receded. The memory of the War of Independence has become fainter in the United States since the War of Libera-

tion. Public memory is short and uncertain, and public estimate of notable men has always been capricious. It has been determined by such conditions as personal magnetism, oratorical achievements, the popularity or unpopularity of the causes with which they were connected. Sir Robert Peel was an incomparably greater man than either Canning or Palmerston, but he was more steadily reviled and depreciated than these two together. Disraeli taunted him before an applauding house "with sublime mediocrity." It was his singular fortune, or misfortune as it was then thought, to champion the cause of Catholic Emancipation which he had for years tried to avert.

It was Viscount Rhondda's lot to be appointed to an office which would have broken his own heart and destroyed the hope of the people if he had failed ; but it was his good fortune in that he was in every sense equal to it ; and because he was equal to it the nation canonized him, and the very children in the streets rejoiced when they knew that their daily bread was secured. No man's fame was established on a better foundation ; it was well deserved and dearly purchased, though many are now unmindful of it, and have forgotten their debt to him.

How durable will be his fame none can tell. Will he have as great a name a century hence as he has at present ? There is in this, the element of chance which cannot be discounted or eliminated. Steps have already been taken to perpetuate his memory in a manner that will correspond with his own spirit, and with the character of the work that he accom-

plished, as well as with the work he would have accomplished, if his life had been spared, on behalf of the children of the future, and for the health of the nation. That ideal remains ; of him it may be said, as it was said of another : "Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart."

True, the idea of a Ministry of Health originated with C. W. Saleeby, Esq., M.D., London, whose proposals, which were published in 1917, Viscount Rhondda adopted and championed, after several consultations with this eminent authority. They also exchanged views respecting the problem of venereal diseases, which resulted in the Venereal Diseases Act which Lord Rhondda achieved. The quacks who were put out of business, and the politicians who befriended them, have never forgiven him. Indeed, the Local Government Board, which has existed for so many decades, actually *lived* for six months under Lord Rhondda.

He added to the glory of commerce, to the glory of statesmanship, and to the glory of his race. True he was a man of cosmopolitan experience who lived in a larger environment than has usually been the case with Welshmen. This partly explains the largeness of his sympathy and the wideness of his mental vision. But he was essentially a man of Wales, not simply because he, like some of the Welsh poets, was fascinated by the scenery of the country, or that he, like many Welsh historians, loved its traditions, but because he was a practical man of the present, who was able to unite the intensity of the Welsh nature with broad views of life. There are no purely Welsh achievements that stand to his

credit, partly for the reason that he never had the opportunity of giving effect to his political ideals, though his example will not be without its influence on the social life and politics of "Cymru Fydd." He proved the national worth of Cymric attributes in the realm of commerce, statesmanship, and international relations. He showed that the Celt, notwithstanding his proneness to dreams and visions, can rest in the actual, and cross the boundary line into the realm of fact and reality. Of all the Welshmen who have risen and made their mark in the world, none surpassed him in the power of acquisition, in width and variety of acquirements, and in symmetry of talents. He was a man who would have risen to eminence in any sphere of life.

Then rest, strong man, in God who gave
Thee life and blessing, wealth and power ;
I bring the tribute of a flower,
And plant it on thy silent grave.

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